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[For additional information on cultural trait distribution, see Category 17.]

Foreword

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121 THE COASTAL REGION OF GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA is a fertile field for the study of old cultural heritages. Artists, poets, and novelists are not the only ones who have felt the allure of this region with its old plantations, its sleepy towns, its cypress swamps, its moss-hung trees, its ox carts, and its Negro peasantry. The works of C. C. Jones, Jr., John Bennett, Marcellus Whaley, Ambrose Gonzales, Reed Smith, Elsie C. Parsons, Ballanta-Taylor, T. J. Woofter, Jr., Guion G. Johnson, Guy B. Johnson, Robert Gordon, Lorenzo Turner, and others testify to the continuing interest of scholars in the history, folklore, folk music, and dialect of the Negro people of this region. These Negroes, more perhaps than any others in the United States, have lived in a physical and cultural isolation which is conducive to the survival of many old customs and thoughtways, both African and European. The present work represents an effort to go a bit deeper than any other work has done into certain aspects of the folk culture of these people in the coastal area. It is particularly welcome at this time, for it not only covers an area which has not received as much attention as have other areas, notably those around Charleston and Beaufort, but it is oriented toward the problem of African heritages in this country, a problem which is coming to be more and more important to the cultural anthropologist.

[171] Readers of *Drums and Shadows* will encounter much that is familiar, for many of the customs and beliefs found

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121 among the Georgia Coastal Negroes are not peculiar to
them. Indeed, many of these traits, such as the belief in
•171 ghosts, witches, and conjure, are either known or practiced
by thousands of white and Negro people in other parts of
the United States; while the dogmas and methods of Father
Divine and Bishop Grace seem to flourish best among the
proletariat of Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Richmond,
and other urban centers. Nevertheless, one finds
121 much in these pages which is new, and one senses the great
virility of old heritages in the daily lives of the coastal
Negroes.

Drums and Shadows makes no pretense of offering a complete picture of the life and culture of these people, but limits its scope of inquiry to certain definite types. In undertaking the work, Miss Granger, the supervisor, also wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis. The visits, interviews, and observations were made by the workers on the Georgia Writers' Project. The investigators were enthusiastic and persistent, and, in spite of the fact that they had had no formal training in ethnological methods, they have made a real contribution to knowledge. They have recorded what is probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time.

121 This question of the nature and importance of African
heritage in America bids fair to develop into something of a
114 controversy. At one extreme are scholars like Robert E.
177 Park and E. B. Reuter who would not even consider the
matter debatable since they virtually deny the existence of
178 *any* significant Africanisms in the United States. Toward
the other extreme is Melville J. Herskovits, who believes that
African heritages are very significant, that they have contributed
much to the culture of white America, and that the

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Appendix

171 1. *Burial at home*

a *Basden says of the Ibo:* "The desire of every Ibo man and woman is to die in their own town or, at least, to be buried within its precincts. For a long period it was very difficult to persuade a man to travel any distance from his native place, and if he were in need of medical assistance an Ibo would seldom agree to go from home in spite of assurances that he would be able to have better treatment elsewhere. In case of death occurring at a distance, if it can be done at all, the brethren will bring the body home for burial. It may be that this cannot be done for several days, according to distance and other circumstances."
Among the Ibos of Nigeria, pp. 115–16.

b *Bosman says of the Coast of Guinea:* "The Negroes are strangely fond of being buried in their own Country; so that if any Person dies out of it, they frequently bring his Corpse home to be buried, unless it be too far distant."
Description of the Coast of Guinea, p. 232.

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "When a man dies at a distance from his home his body is always taken back, when possible, to his home, wrapped up in mats covered by a cloth and placed on a bier or cradle, which is carried on the shoulders of his relatives. The reason assigned for this is that the dead must not be severed from the company of other ancestors—they should be buried close to their living descendants on whom they are dependent for nourishment. Moreover, it is important that the ritual traditional to the

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kindred should be carried out accurately. This cannot be done by strangers."
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 309.

d *Nassau says of the Bihe country:* "It is considered essential that a man should die in his own country, if not in his own town. On the way to Bailundu, shortly after leaving Bihe territory, I met some men running at great speed, carrying a sick man tied to a pole, in order that he might die in his own country."
Fetichism in West Africa, p. 228.

2. *Burial of sections of body*

a *Burton says of Gelele:* "Amongst the Egbas and various tribes of the Congo family . . . , various small parts of the body are brought home to be reinterred."
A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome, II, *165.*

b *Ellis says of the Gold Coast:* "*Toh-fo,* 'one lost' is a ceremony held when a person has met with death, and the body has either been destroyed or cannot be found; for instance, when a man has been burned to death and the body reduced to ashes, or when one has been drowned and the body cannot be recovered. . . . In the case of a man destroyed by fire, some of the ashes of the burned body, or of the house in which it was consumed, are placed in the coffin with similar ceremonies.

"In this ceremony a fragment of the corpse is always interred if possible; and, if no portion of it can be found, some earth, water, or other substance from the locality in which the death occurred."
The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 223.

3. *Burial of relatives and strangers*

a *Pearce says of West Africa:* "There is a strong feeling of kinship in Africa and only relatives may be buried in the same piece of ground together." (Interview with John Pearce of Hinesville, Ga., an ex-missionary in West Africa.)

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4. *Caul*

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a *Beckwith says of Jamaica:* "A baby born with a caul has the power to see duppies without the duppies' harming him. Parkes was born with a caul and attributed his frequent visions of ghosts to this circumstance."
Black Roadways, p. 57.

b *Herskovits says:* "Born with a caul is significant in Dahomey, West Africa, Dutch Guiana, Jamaica, and probably everywhere among the New World Negroes."
From correspondence dated October 10, 1938.

c *Peterkin says:* "Animals have 'second sight' and can see spirits, but only people born with cauls over their faces have this keen vision."
Roll, Jordan, Roll, p. 206.

d *Beckwith says:* "The caul is also connected with sympathetic magic of a healing, rather than an injurious kind. It should be removed and carefully parched over a hot brick and a bit put into the baby's tea to prevent convulsions due to the irritation of a ghost."
Black Roadways, p. 57.

e *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "A child born with a caul is believed to be strong in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth."
Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 95.

f *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "A child born with a caul—'with a veil over its face'—who follows the first child after twins, is called, if a boy Wusŭ, if a girl Wúmé. The child born after such a one is called Wŭsă or Wuhwẽ, according to sex. If the child with the caul does not follow the first child born after twins, then the names given are Kesŭ or Kesî; the child who follows one of these is called Kesă, if a boy. No special name is given a girl born immediately after a child with a caul."
Dahomey, I, 264.

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5. *Charms, made of animals, insects*

a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Thus from the earth, from trees and shrubs, from rocks, and from the bodies of animals and humans the Dahomean obtains materials for his *gbǒ*, while from the *Azizą̌* and other spirits of the forest, from Legbá, the Fá Group, Dą, and the Great Gods, he obtained knowledge of how to endow them with effective power."
Dahomey, II, *287.*

b *Leonard says of West Africa:* "These are procured from or made with the spines of certain animals, porcupines more especially, compounded with potash, iron filings, and other inorganic matters, which are reduced to a powder. In this form they are supposed to be communicated invisibly with such celerity and exactness against a person, that blood poisoning supervenes."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 500.

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Paramaribo Negro: Fiofio,* as envisaged in this belief, is the name of an insect and also of a spirit which, taking the shape of this insect, enters human bodies, causing illness and sometimes death. It comes as a result of family quarrelling which does not end in reconciliation. Strictly speaking, it is the extending of gestures of friendship or intimacy at a later date, when the bitterness of the quarrel has either passed or is masked, which brings on the illness. Such gestures of intimacy or friendship include accepting food that is offered, or a caress, or borrowing some kind of wearing apparel, or asking and receiving any other favor, and the resulting illness comes to either one or both of the persons who had participated in the quarrel."
Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 53.

6. *Charms, counter*

a *Farrow says of the Yoruba:* "The power of 'medicine' (*ogun*) exercised through a certain channel may be neutralised or overcome by a superior power of *ogun* through another channel. Van Gennep tells us that in Madagascar

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fady (the local name for 'taboo') may be broken by one who has a higher power known as *hasina*. So in Yoruba, a stronger 'medicine' is employed to overcome, or counteract, an evil one, or a curse incurred through a broken *ewo* ('taboo'). This is the explanation of the use of 'charms,' whether material (as amulets), vocal, or actionary. It is the invocation of a higher power, or a fuller measure of the same power."
Faith, Fancies and Fetich, p. 121.

b *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Súkpíkpâ, *brings danger to another*. a. This *gbǒ* is essentially a 'counter' against sorcery. Actually, it demonstrates the principle which will be developed at greater length in the succeeding pages, that the line between good magic and bad magic is difficult to determine, since evil can be done by a charm otherwise good, if it is directed toward an evil end, and good by an evil charm, if properly handled. This *gbǒ* is called *agbǫ́ngba* 'outside'—and consists of a piece of wood first split in two, and then, after the ingredients are placed between the pieces, tied together with cord and fastened by passing the end through, and tying but not knotting it. One end is colored green. If a man who is strong in magic power is angry with the owner, and it is deemed likely that an attempt may be made to kill him with magic, the owner takes this charm, inserts it in the ground near his house, puts a stone on top of it and the evil magic is thereby not only prevented from becoming effective, but any evil attempted will rebound on him who has sent it."
Dahomey, II, *269*.

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of Dahomey:* "No matter how strong the magic, somewhere there is stronger magic which not only can overcome it, but may, in certain cases, turn back its effect on the person who invoked the original magic. This is true not only of evil charms, but of protective ones as well. Thus, we have in lengthy detail, information concerning a charm which a man buries in his field to protect it. Against this there is an evil 'counter'

which will not only allow its user to steal from the field, but brings evil on the rightful owner. Against this bad magic there is, in turn, an elaborate 'counter-counter,' which brings the thief to book."
An Outline of Dahomean Religious Belief, p. 65.

7. *Charms, foot-track*

a *Puckett says of the Gold Coast:* "On the Gold Coast it is believed that a man may be harmed by a 'medicine' made from the dust picked up from his foot-tracks. . . ."
Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro, p. 220.

8. *Charms, general*

a *Brown says of the Bantu tribes:* "As the Bechuana believe that no misfortune befalls one naturally, but is always the effect of malevolence on the part of the living or the dead, so they also strongly believe that good fortune can only be maintained by means of charms."
Among the Bantu Nomads, p. 137.

b *Ellis says of the Ewe of West Africa:* "Magic powders are very numerous. One kind, when blown against a door or window, causes it to fly open, no matter how securely it may be fastened; another, when thrown upon the footprints of an enemy, makes him mad; a third, used in the same way, neutralizes the evil effects of the second; and a fourth destroys the sight of all who look upon it.

"Magic unguents (iro) are not uncommon. They and the powders are obtained from the priests, and must be rubbed on the body of the person who is to be influenced by them. Some are believed to compel a man to lend money, but their more common property is to constrain the unwilling fair to listen favourably to the amorous proposal."
The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 94.

c *Herskovits says:* "In Dahomey magic charms are sold by professional workers of magic."
Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 31.

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171 d *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Magic charms form another type of personal property. As has been noted, these charms, which include herbs and other medicines, are held by tradition to have been revealed chiefly to hunters in the bush. When a hunter had learned how to make a given charm, or had been taught how to use a certain leaf to cure some disease, this knowledge was then his property and had salable value. When he was sought out for a charm to achieve a specific purpose—to protect a man on a journey, or to make of him a successful trader, or to insure the death of an enemy—if the hunter detailed the contents of the charm, how to put the ingredients together, the situation in which it would become effective and any formulae necessary to set it in operation, this knowledge then became the property of the purchaser as well as the vender. . . . To the professional dealers in charms, then, these comprise a stock in trade that is their property and potential wealth; for others, while the charms they own are property, they do not represent a source of income."
Dahomey, I, *81–82.*

e *Kingsley says of West Africa:* "Charms are made for every occupation and desire in life—loving, hating, buying, selling, fishing, planting, travelling, hunting, etc."
Travels in West Africa, p. 448.

f *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "That is, people are spoken of as 'buying luck' or 'wearing luck,' and comments are heard about the importance of carrying one's 'luck' when walking alone at night, when going on a journey, when wooing a woman, or seeking work, or combating the effect of black magic."
Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 99.

g *Nassau says of the Gabun territory:* "For every human passion or desire of every part of our nature, for our thousand necessities or wishes, a fetich can be made, its operations being directed to the attainment of one specified wish, and limited in power only by the possible existence of some more powerful antagonizing spirits."
Fetichism in West Africa, p. 85.

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h *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "Ibokk are, for the most part, made for defensive purposes, for protection against ill-wishers or evil messengers, but are sometimes procured from 'doctors' to harm an enemy."
Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 21.

i "There is what may be termed a 'white art' as well as a 'black art,' and the great majority of fetiches and charms are intended to *protect* from evil, and not to *attack* innocent folk."
The Geographical Journal, xxxi, *607.*

9. *Charms, graveyard dirt*

a *Pearce says of West Africa:* "Juju bags containing graveyard dirt and other material which had had a spell put upon it by juju are effective for either good or evil purposes. A bag of this sort worn around the neck, as a Catholic wears a scapula, serves as a protection from the spells of enemies. However, if a man wishes to work evil on his enemy, he may purchase a juju bag containing evil powder, and through it cast a spell on his enemy."
(Interview)

10. *Charms, hair and nails*

a *Ellis says of the Ewe:* "Hence it is usual for pieces of hair and nails to be carefully buried or burned, in order that they may not fall into the hands of sorcerers; and whenever a king or chief expectorates, the saliva is carefully gathered up and hidden or buried."
The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 99.

b *Meek says of the Jukun:* "Sorcerers also capture and injure or kill souls in a variety of ways, notably by acting on the hair, nail-parings or excreta of a person, the soul substance being regarded as immanent in these. If a person wishes to injure another he has merely to obtain a piece of his enemy's nails and hand them to a sorcerer, who, if he knows his work, will speedily cause the death of the former owner of the nail-parings. For this reason a Jukun always

171 hides or buries his hair and nail cuttings. Some Jukun burn these, but others would refrain from doing this on the ground that the burning would cause a scorching of his soul."
A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 298.

c *Milligan says of the Mpongwe:* "The parings of finger-nails, the hair of the victim and such things are powerful ingredients in these 'medicines.' An Mpongwe, after having his hair cut, gathers up every hair most carefully and burns it lest an enemy should secure it and use it to his injury. When sickness continues for a length of time they usually conclude that some offended relation has caused an evil spirit to abide in the town."
The Fetish Folk of West Africa, p. 39.

d *Nassau says of the Bantu:* "So fearful are natives of power being thus obtained over them, that they have their hair cut only by a friend; and even then they carefully burn it or cast it into a river."
Fetichism in West Africa, p. 83.

e *Nassau says of the Benga, the Mpongwe, and the Fang:* "If it be desired to obtain power over some one else, the oganga must be given by the applicant, to be mixed in the sacred compound, either crumbs from the food, or clippings of finger nails or hair, or (most powerful!) even a drop of blood of the person over whom influence is sought. These represent the life or body of that person."
Fetichism in West Africa, p. 83.

f *Nassau says of the Banita region:* "Sitting one day by a village boat-landing in the Banita region, about 1866, while my crew prepared for our journey, I was idly plucking at my beard, and carelessly flung away a few hairs. Presently I observed that some children gathered them up. Asking my Christian assistant what that meant, he told me: 'They will have a fetich made with those hairs; when next you visit this village, they will ask you for some favor, and you will grant it, by the power they will thus have over you."
Fetichism in West Africa, p. 83.

17 in Ewe the word *vŏ-sẹsa* (amulet) is derived from *vŏ* and *sa*, to tie or bind."

•171 *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 118.*

c *Farrow says of the Yoruba:* "Charms and amulets of various kinds are greatly used by the Yorubas. The Bale, or head-chief, of Ogbomosho, being of a particularly nervous and superstitious nature, had not only a number of tutelary gods guarding the threshold of his dwelling, but had laid in the ground, from one side of his compound to the other, chains and other charms to render each person who approached him powerless to do any evil. Charms for the protection of property are fastened to the houses, etc. They may consist of sticks, stumps of trees, etc."
Faith, Fancies and Fetich, p. 123.

d *Beckwith says:* "Other acts are to be avoided lest they pay the penalty of death to the immediate family. Never add to a house or cut down an old tree."
Black Roadways, p. 87.

12. *Charms, medicinal*

a *Delafosse says of the African in general:* "Belief . . . in the power of amulets and talismans is legendary among the Negroes. There is not one of them, whatever his religion, who does not wear on his body several 'gris-gris,' of which one is to preserve him from such and such a malady, a second from the evil eye."
Negroes of Africa, pp. 236–37.

b *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "Another word sometimes used to express amulet is *ogun*, which, however, more properly means medicinal preparation, poison, or magical drug."
The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 118.

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "We had not been long in her hut before we noticed the iron arm-band she wore. It was, we knew, a '*tapu*'—a magical preventive which, in this instance,

warned its wearer of danger, and kept her from harm in a combat."
Rebel Destiny, p. 288.

d "Obia, then, is the spirit; obia is the preventive and curing agent; obias are the charms that are worn by people to help them."
Rebel Destiny, p. 321.

13. *Chicken and cock superstitions*

a *Herskovits says:* "Frizzled chickens are prized both in Africa and in the New World for their ability to find and scratch up evil magic buried against the owner."
From correspondence dated October 10, 1938.

b *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "A cock crowing at midnight or long before dawn is immediately killed, as it is considered unlucky."
Ashanti Proverbs, p. 80.

14. *Cicatrization*

a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Another form which these positive injunctions take has to do with facial cuts, which vary from sib to sib. Thus the Adjalénû make no cuts at all. The Hwedánu who live in Whydah, make two cuts on each cheek. The Agblomenu, who are considered a group of autochthonous inhabitants of the plateau of Abomey, make three cuts on each side of the face, one on the temple called *àdjàkàsí* (tail of a rat), and two on the cheek, both in front of the ear. The Gedevi, another aboriginal group near Abomey, distinguish themselves by means of three cuts on each temple. At the present time all Dahomeans are supposed to have three cuts on the temple, though the Agblomenu have suppressed the two of these three and only cut the 'rat's tail.'"
Dahomey, I, *162.*

b "Twelve sets of cuts constitute a complete cicatrization."
Dahomey, I, *292.*

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c "The last design is placed between the breasts, and often takes the form of a series of links or of straight lines radiating from a central point."
Dahomey, I, *295.*

d *Livingstone says of South Africa:* "They mark themselves by a line of little raised cicatrices, each of which is a quarter of an inch long; they extend from the tip of the nose to the root of the hair on the forehead."
Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa, p. 576.

15. *Conjure, illness and death*

a *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "They consequently attribute sickness and death, other than death resulting from injury or violence, to persons who have for bad purposes enlisted the services of evil spirits, that is to say, to wizards and witches."
The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 117.

b *Meek says of the Jukun:* "Sudden deaths, especially of young people, are usually regarded as the work of sorcerers (*ba-shiko* or *ba-shibu*). If the deceased had been noted for his disrespect to his seniors his death would be ascribed to offended ancestors, and he would go to his grave with 'bloodshot eyes'; but otherwise it is thought that one who had died suddenly had met his death by the foul means of witchcraft and would take vengeance in his own time."
A Sudanese Kingdom, pp. 223–24.

c *Milligan says of a Mpongwe tribe:* "Sickness and death, they believe, may be caused by fetish medicine, which need not be administered to the victim, but is usually laid beside the path where he is about to pass."
The Fetish Folk of West Africa, p. 39.

d *Nassau says of West Africa:* " 'According to native ideas, all over Africa, such a thing as death from natural causes does not exist. Whatever ill befalls a man or a family, it is always the result of witchcraft, and in every case the witch-doctors are consulted to find out who has been guilty of it."

Fetichism in West Africa, p. 117.

e *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "When a man falls sick because his soul has gone forth and is being detained by an enemy, or when he believes that such an one is trying to entice it from out his body, he, in turn, goes to a Juju man known to have the power of seeing clearly."

Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 121.

f *Talbot says of the Yoruba:* "The Yoruba, like all other tribes here, considered that a large number of deaths was due to witchcraft or ill-will on the part of some enemy, and when many people died of famine or sickness, a general meeting was held and resort had to divination to find out the guilty persons, who were at once killed or offered in sacrifice to one of the Orisha."

The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, III, *474–75.*

16. *"Daddy"*

a *Hutchinson says of the Ethiopian:* "The appellative 'Daddy' is used by the Africans as expressive of their respect as well as confidence."

Ten Years' Wanderings among the Ethiopians, p. 22.

17. *Dances, buzzard lope, etc.*

a *Cuney-Hare says of the Bushman:* "They possess a variety of dances pertaining to social customs, each of which has its appropriate chant. One dance imitates the actions of different animals."

Negro Musicians and Their Music, pp. 10–12.

b *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "Those who danced for the buzzard had no machetes, but went about in a circle, moving with bodies bent forward from their waists and with arms thrown back in imitation of the bird from which their spirit took its name."

Rebel Destiny, p. 330.

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c "Bush and town invoke the buzzard, *Opete*, so named in Ashanti, and sacred everywhere in West Africa. . . ."
Rebel Destiny, Preface, X.

d "The men were dancing to the great Kromanti spirits; the tiger-jaguar—and the buzzard, two of the three forms which the dreaded Kromanti *obia* can take. 'Obia! Huh! Huh!' one ejaculated, imitating the tiger, as his dancing became wilder and wilder."
Rebel Destiny, p. 17.

18. *Dances, funerals*

a *Moore says of a Mandingo funeral:* "They begin with Crying, and at Night they go to Singing and Dancing, and continue so doing till the Time they break up and depart."
Travels Into the Inland Parts of Africa, p. 130.

b *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "People from a far place who were related to the deceased and people from towns near by, also form their own companies. They dance the war-dances in the morning, and at 'the mouth' of evening, when the sun is slanting, they circle the grave. It is now that the corpse is taken to the grave."
The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland, p. 194.

19. *Dances, religious significance*

a *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "Dancing in Africa invariably has a religious significance."
Religion and Art in Ashanti, p. 184.

b *Talbot says of the Sudanese tribes:* "Among Nigerians, however, it would appear that the god was not evolved out of the dance, but was there first and the dance was developed as a method of worship, of attaining union with him, and of exerting an influence with *his help* on the fertility of men and of crops."
The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, III, *803.*

20. *Day names*

a *Beckwith says of Jamaica:* "According to an old custom recorded from the African Gold Coast, every child receives at birth a name depending on the day of the week on which it is born.

Friday Cuffee (Coo-fee)"
Black Roadways, p. 59.

b *Ellis says of the Tshi-Speaking native:* "Every child, from the moment of birth, is given a name which is derived from the day of the week on which it is born."
The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of West Africa, p. 219.

c *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "As soon as it is born, all the old women shout, 'Hail so-and-so,' at once naming the infant after that particular day of the week upon which it is born. This name, which is sometimes called 'God's name,' will ever after be the child's natal day name. To this, as will be noted presently, will later be added a patronymic, and possibly later on in life one or more 'strong names' (*mmerane*)."
Religion and Art in Ashanti, pp. 56–57.

21. *Days, lucky and unlucky*

a *Ellis says of the Tshi-Speaking native:* "There are national and tribal lucky and unlucky days, and individuals also have days which they consider lucky and unlucky for themselves. Kwoffi Karikari considered Thursday an unlucky day, and would never commence any undertaking on a Thursday. Kidjo Monday, which falls early in February, is considered by the Ashantis the luckiest day of the year. Their most unlucky day is the anniversary of the Saturday on which Osai Tutu was slain in an ambush near Acromanti in 1731."
The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 220.

22. *Diviners, Divining, Seed Casting, Etc.*

a *Delafosse says:* "Numerous fortune-tellers predict the future and reveal hidden things, by means of processes,

171 many of which strangely resemble those which our own clairvoyants employ."
Negroes of Africa, p. 237.

b *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "A third type, called *agɔ́kwíka*, employed two magically treated *agô* seeds tied to the ends of a cord long enough to go about the neck of the accused, and the seeds were buried lightly in the ground. Such was the spiritual power in these seeds, that if the accused was guilty of the crime, he could not remove them from the ground; if he succeeded in rising, he was declared innocent."
Dahomey, II, *18.*

c "In this myth, not only is the explanation found of how the prevalent system of divination came to man, but the principal outlines of the practices which characterize the Fá cult are to be discerned—that is, the sixteen palm-kernels employed in throwing the lots, the sixteen combinations in which they may fall, and which foretell the future. . . ."
Dahomey, II, *206.*

d "The details of this system by means of which the future is foretold may now be considered. In essence, Fá is based on the interpretation, by reference to appropriate myths, of the permutations and combinations obtained by the diviner when he manipulates the sixteen palm-kernels he employs for this purpose. Before him as he works lies a rectangular wooden tray, on which powdered white clay or meal has been sprinkled. In one hand he holds his sixteen palm-kernels, and with great rapidity brings the hand which holds them into the palm of the other one, leaving either one or two seeds for an instant before they are once more picked up and the process is repeated. As soon as he has glimpsed the one or two kernels in his left hand, the right, with the palm-kernels, closes down upon it and the two clasp the seeds. The index and second fingers of the right hand are, however, left free and with these he describes

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marks in the white powder on the board in front of him. Moving his fingers away from him, he makes a double line for each single kernel, a single line if two seeds are left. The process is repeated eight times for a complete reading." *Dahomey*, II, *209–10*.

e *Rattray says of the Ashanti:* "The soothsayer, oracle man, or diviner, as will be seen presently, takes a leading part in the everyday life of these people. He is consulted on almost every conceivable occasion. Hardly anything can be done until he has been asked. He is really a *medium*, a 'go-between' in the land of the living and the world of spirit ancestors. The root of the word used to describe this person is generally the same as that found in the word for shrine. The people consult him at some shrine, the spirit in which guides him and directs his answers."
The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland, I, 44.

23. *Drums*

a *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Paramaribo Negro:*

"Drums are the most important instruments in both Town and Bush, and the drummers, in these as in all Negro cultures, achieve a virtuosity of performance and an intricacy of rhythm that come of long practice. It was impossible to obtain satisfactory recordings of drumming which would reveal the complexity of these rhythm-patterns, chiefly because, lacking electrical recording apparatus, the inner rhythms which in combination give a steady beat are lost, and only the points where the notes of the several instruments coincide can be discerned.

"The drums have more than a musical significance in this culture. Tradition assigns to them the threefold power of summoning the gods and the spirits of the ancestors to appear, of articulating the messages of these supernatural beings when they arrive, and of sending them back to their habitats at the end of each ceremony. Both in Town and in

the Bush, the dancers who are the worshippers,—one of the most important expressions of worship is dancing—face the drums and dance toward them, in recognition of the voice of the god within the instruments."
Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 520–21.

b *Milligan says of the West African:* "The fact is, however, that the only one of his musical instruments which the African regards with profound respect is his dearly beloved *tom-tom*—the drum to which he dances."
The Fetish Folk of West Africa, p. 77.

24. *Drums, funeral*

a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Outside the house the funerary zẹ̀li, a pottery drum, is played day and night. The drummers are the members of the *dókpwê* of the quarter where the dead man lived, or if he was a villager, of his village, and it is the head of this *dókpwê* who is the commanding *dókpwégâ* at the funeral."
Dahomey, I, 355.

b *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "That night whenever we stirred in our sleep we strained for the sound of the drums, but the wind blew from the east, and though Gankwe, where the dead man lay in state, was but a ten-minute run down the rapids, we could hear nothing. In the morning, however, we heard them plainly, heard the invocations drummed by the grave diggers on their way to the burial ground deep in the bush on the opposite bank."
Rebel Destiny, p. 3.

c *Livingstone says of South Africa:* "Drums were beating over the body of a man who had died the preceding day, and some women were making a clamorous wail at the door of his hut, and addressing the deceased as if alive. The drums continued beating the whole night, with as much regularity as a steam-engine thumps, on board ship."
Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa, p. 467.

17 een inches high and twelve inches in diameter, and which does not have a foot, is used in the Sagbatá rites. The other more conventional drums range from two feet in size to a length of five feet and more."
Dahomey, II, *318.*

• 171 e *Moore says of the Mandingo:* ". . . with him came two or three Women, and the same Number of Mundingo Drums, which are about a Yard long, and a Foot, or twenty Inches diameter at the Top, but less at the Bottom, made out of a solid Piece of Wood, and covered, only at the widest End, with the Skin of a Kid. They beat upon them with only one Stick, and their left Hand, to which the Women will dance very briskly."
Travels Into the Inland Parts of Africa, p. 64.

f *Ward says of the Bakongo country:* "The natives were drumming on a goat-skin stretched tightly across the mouth of a hollowed-out log, and dancing round a fire lighted in their midst, one man singing a refrain, while others took up the chorus; and the mingled sound of the voices and the distant beating of other drums in neighboring villages helped to keep me awake."
Five Years with the Congo Cannibals, p. 68.

g *Beckwith says:* "The beating of the gombay drum is a familiar accompaniment of death."
Black Roadways, p. 83.

26. *Drum Messages*

a *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "A great deal is heard in Africa about the wonderful way in which news can be passed on over great distances in an incredibly short space of time. It has been reported that the news of the fall of Khartum was known among the natives of Sierra Leone the same day, and other equally wonderful instances are quoted to show that the native has some extraordinary rapid means of communicating important events. It must, however, be remembered that most of the instances that one hears quoted are incapable of verification, and would, moreover, probably be found to have been much exaggerated. Having said this much, however, it must be admitted that these natives have a means of intercommunication which often inspires wonder and curiosity on the part of Europeans. One of such means of communication is by drumming.

"This idea the European will readily grasp, and being familiar with various means of *signalling*, will suppose that some such a method might be adapted to drums; but among the Ashantis the drum is not used as a means of *signalling* in the sense that we would infer, that is by rapping out words by means of a prearranged code, but (to the native mind) is used to sound or speak the actual words."
Ashanti Proverbs, pp. 133–34.

b "I first became interested in this difficult subject many years ago. At that time it was generally known that the Ashanti, in common with certain other West Coast peoples, were able to convey messages over great distances and in an incredibly short space of time by means of drums, and it was thought that their system was based upon some such method as that with which Europeans are familiar in the Morse code."
Ashanti, p. 242.

27. *Earrings*

a *Beckwith says of the Jamaica Negro:* "Parkes says that men who 'deal in spirits' wear a red flannel shirt, or a cross-piece of red under their ordinary clothes, and generally gold earrings. Not all men who wear earrings are Obeah Men; fishermen, for example, generally wear one earring. The gold is said to 'brighten their eyes to see ghosts,' but also a gold earring is put on to improve the natural sight."
Black Roadways, p. 108.

28. *Earth thrown in grave*

a *Brown says of the Bantu Nomad, (the Bechuana)*: "A pit is dug and into it the body is lowered in the sitting position. The grave is then filled in, each person present slowly

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pouring earth onto the body and around it with their hands until the grave is full."
Among the Bantu Nomads, p. 67.

b *Meek says of Nigeria:* "Loose earth is then thrown in on the body, together with the mat and cloth. Even very young sons must throw in a little earth, as evidence that they had taken a share in their father's burial rites. The last handfuls are thrown in with the back turned to the grave, as a sign that they had finished with the dead man."
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, pp. 307–08.

29. *Echo of speech*

a *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, '*Grâce* [et] mise'corde,' and the family murmured it in response."
Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 161.

30. *Farewell to corpse (spoken to)*

a *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "Now the ceremony was drawing to a close, and the leave takings were to be said. . . . Distinctly the low voice of Sedefo came to us as he addressed the corpse:

> *'The hour has come when we must part from you. What the Earth has decreed we cannot help. We have done for you what we could. We have given you a funeral worthy of you. You must care for us, and you must deliver us from all evil that may come upon us.'"*

Rebel Destiny, p. 18.

31. *Farewell to corpse* (*touched*)

a *Pearce says of the Gold Coast of West Africa:* "The mourners sit around the body with their hands upon it, and chant a farewell dirge."

32. *Fig, sacred*

a *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "The chief here—in answer to my question—said that the fig tree was a famous sanctuary, and that any one sentenced to death who escaped there would be safe."
Ashanti, pp. 128–29.

33. *Folk Tales*

a *Rattray says of Hausa folk tales:* "Stories and traditions collected through the medium of an interpreter are amusing, and might prove of interest in the nursery, though much would have to be omitted or toned down, as savage folk-lore is often coarse and vulgar according to our notions."
Hausa Folk-Lore Customs, Proverbs, Etc., I, *Author's Note*, XI.

34. *Forest-dwelling forces*

a *Farrow says of the Yoruba:* "Certain trees are particularly sacred. The silk-cotton tree (Yoruba *peregun*) is highly venerated throughout West Africa 'from the Senegal to the Niger,' probably because of its majestic appearance, for it is of little utility, the timber being soft, and its cotton possessing neither strength nor durability. This tree often grows to a stupendous height, approximating 300 feet, far out-topping all other trees of the forest."
Faith, Fancies and Fetich, p. 16.

b *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "The psychological liaison between the gods and magic, however, is revealed in the character of the semi-divine spirits who are believed to people the forest—Mínonâ, Hoho, the *abikŭ* and the *azizą*."
Dahomey, II, *260.*

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c *Kingsley says of the Bantu tribes:* "In some part of the long single street of most villages there is built a low hut in which charms are hung, and by which grows a consecrated plant, a lily, a euphorbia, or a fig."
Travels in West Africa, p. 452.

d *Leonard says of Southern Nigeria:* "Groves and woods, and those portions of the bush close to every town which are reserved as burial-grounds, are considered sacred and worship is paid to either the spirits or the deities who inhabit or preside over them."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 298.

35. *Fowl, sacrifice of*

a *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "After this invitation to be gone, the fowl, called *adire-iranna*, is sacrificed, which, besides securing a right-of-way for the soul, is supposed also to guide it. The feathers of the fowl are scattered around the house, and the bird itself carried out to a bush-road, where it is cooked and eaten."
The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 160.

b *Leyden says of the Mandingo territory:* "The journey was marked by nothing remarkable, except the sacrifice of a white chicken, which was offered by Johnson, the interpreter, to the spirits of the woods, described as a powerful race of white beings, with long flowing hair."
Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Africa, I, *339.*

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "The next rite is known as Eku-ibu-ocha, a phrase which seems to mean 'Making the face (of the dead man) white (*i.e.* radiant).' Women of the deceased's family bring a cock fastened to a string of cowries and one of the women who is considered especially lucky (*e.g.* whose children are all alive), or some person previously indicated by the deceased, holds or hangs the cock over the dead man's head. When the cock shakes its wings (a sign of acceptance by the deceased), it is taken out and hung at

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the door of the hut or on a branch of an *oterre* tree in the compound. After a while it is taken down and its neck is drawn, the blood being allowed to drip on to the ground at the threshold. The fowl is then cooked and eaten by the female relatives. The intention in leaving the fowl hung up is, apparently, to give the deceased time to see and receive the offering."
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, pp. 303–04.

d *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "The eldest son supplies a sheep and a fowl which are killed in the yard of the compound (*dundon*) and grain-food is prepared which is called *sanfana* (in Dagomba, *sore segam*, literally 'food for the road'). The sextons and others attending the funeral partake of this food, and a portion of the grain-food and a leg of the fowl are also placed in a calabash which is set down in the room where the corpse had been laid prior to interment."
The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland, II, *460–61.*

86. *Funeral, proper observance*

a *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "It is considered the greatest disgrace to a family not to be able to hold the proper ceremonies at the death of one of their number, a notion which is comprehensible when we remember how much the welfare of the soul of the deceased is supposed to depend upon their performance. Hence families not unfrequently reduce themselves almost to beggary in order to carry them out, or pawn or sell their children to raise the money necessary."
The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 161.

b *Leonard says of the Ibo:* "All Ibo place great faith in the due and proper observance of the funeral ceremony, for they are of the opinion that it enables the soul to go to God and to find its final destination, and that without this sacred rite the soul is prevented by the other spirits from eating, or in any way associating with them, and in this manner, from entering into the Creator's presence. So in this way it becomes an outcast and a wanderer on the face of the earth,

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haunting houses and frequently burial grounds, or is forced perhaps to return to this world in the form or body of some animal."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 142.

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "The spirit of a dead Ibo is considered to hover round his home, or wander aimlessly in the underworld, until the final funeral rites have been performed."
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 314.

d *Milligan says of the Mpongwe of Gaboon:* "The spirit of the deceased knows all that is going on and is supposed to be very sensitive in regard to the amount of mourning and the details of the funeral."
The Fetish Folk of West Africa, p. 148.

37. *Funerals, wakes—importance, social activity*

a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "A death-watch is now provided to see to it that the body is not left unattended. This watch is kept with rigid care, especially when the body is in the hands of the members of the *dókpwê* who actually carry out the ritual of the funeral. This is because of the opportunity a corpse affords anyone who is desirous of obtaining the means for working magic by capturing the soul of the deceased, since a bit of the dead man's cloth, or, better still, some of his hair or nail-parings might easily be taken and used to this end. Furthermore, with such material, or with a cloth placed inside the mouth of the corpse to absorb some of the moisture remaining there, charms of great power and therefore great value could be made."
Dahomey, I, *353.*

b *Leonard says of the Ibo and other tribes:* "Although the death of a man is in reality a great loss to his household or even to the community, the occasion of his obsequies is regarded as an event of great entertainment to the community at large. It is looked upon as a circumstance in which the family honour is concerned in a distinctly two fold sense, affecting its reputation in this world as well as in the next.

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For the reception of the soul of the deceased in spiritland and his final prestige are altogether dependent on the grandeur and liberality of the human entertainment."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, pp. 157–58.

c *Talbot says of the Sudanese tribes:* "A wake invariably takes place, the duration and grandeur of which depend upon the wealth of the family. Animals—including cows if these can be afforded—are slain in profusion, while palm wine and gin are provided in plenty, and in old days, rum. Cannons and guns are fired off to give notice to the ghosts that a 'big man' is coming, and plays are performed by the clubs and societies of which the deceased was a member. In fact, funerals provide the best opportunity for festivals, 'plays,' dances and performances in general."
The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, III, *473.*

88. *Harvest festivals*

a *Ellis says of the Tshi-Speaking native:* "Yam, or Harvest Festivals.—These appear to be festivals held for the purpose of returning thanks to the gods for having protected the crop. There are apparently two; one held in September, when the yam crop is ripe, and another, called *Ojirrah,* in December, when it is planted. A minor festival, called *Affi-neh-dzea-fi,* which is held in April, appears, however, to be of the same nature. The September festival lasts a fortnight, and is commenced by a loud beating of drums. It is called by the Ashantis *Appatram,* and no new yam may be eaten by the people till the close of the festival."
The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 229.

b *Meek says of Nigeria:* "Public sacrifice to Ala may be offered periodically at the beginning of the agricultural season, before clearing new land, or after clearing old, before planting yams, or at the end of the yam harvest.
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 26.

•171 c *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "There appear to be at least three great festivals which are held by the Talense in connexion with the crops and harvest."
The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland, II, *358–59.*

d *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "At the time of new yam planting, people came from far and near to beg protection and increase for their crops and herds. On such occasions the brow of the chief priest is bound with a fillet of white cloth, which may not be taken off till the time of sacrifice comes round again. He marks all the people with white chalk, as a sign that they have attended the festival and asked the blessing of the genius of the pool."
Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 38.

17 39. *Hoe, magic*

a *Rattray repeats a Hausa folk tale:* "When he struck one blow on the ground with the hoe, then he climbed on the hoe and sat down, and the hoe started to hoe, and fairly flew until it had done as much as the hoers. It passed them, and reached the boundary of the furrow."
Hausa Folk-Lore Customs, Proverbs, Etc., I, *74–76.*

b *Rattray tells an Ashanti folk tale:* "The Hoe turned over a huge tract (of land). Then they stopped work and went off, and the Porcupine took the hoe and hid it. And Kwaku, the Spider, saw (where he put it). He said, 'This hoe that I have seen, to-morrow very, very early I shall come and take it to do my work.' Truly, very, very, very early, the Spider went and got it; he took to his farm. Now, the Spider did not know how to make it stop, and he raised his song:

'Gyensaworowa, Kotoko, saworowa.
Gyensaworowa, Kotoko, saworowa,
Gyensaworowa.'

And the Hoe, when it commenced hoeing, continued hoeing. And it hoed until it came too far away. Now it reached the Sea-god's water. Thence it came to the Land of White-men-far, and the White men took it, and looked at it, and made

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17 does not depend, as that of much other sculpture does, on elaborate superficial decoration scratched upon a weak and vaguely realized mass. There is rarely a sense of overdecoration or pretense, a feeling of inner rottenness, as though, one could squash the whole fabric between the hands, or scrape off its ornaments at a stroke. Surface decorations there may be in profusion, but they are based upon a firm foundation and integrated with it, to form an unyielding and immovable structure."

17 *Primitive Negro Sculpture, p. 37.*

e *Kingsley says of the West African:* "He cuts from a tree a moderately thick branch which he carves into a rude resemblance of the human figure; usually these figures are simply cylindrical pieces of wood, from ten to fourteen inches in length and from three to four in diameter. Two or three inches from one end, which may be called the top, the stick is notched so as to roughly resemble a neck, and the top is then rounded to bear some rough distant resemblance to a head."

Travels in West Africa, p. 510.

f *Leonard says of the Ibo and other tribes:* "It is quite impossible to understand the spiritual conception and the god-idea of these natives unless we possess a knowledge of that peculiarly personal system of society out of which it has evolved and developed; and we recognise that the gods are but the shadows or spirits, so called, of mortals. They are rude but perfect pictures of the very worshippers in whose own human image they have been either kneaded out of clay or carved out of wood."

The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 433.

g "Not so the barbarian, however. With him the Ju-Ju or emblem is no child's play, no mere outlet for a state of activity which he is not particularly desirous of, not even a safety-valve by which the accumulated steam of his pent-up emotions might escape, but a matter of life and death, connecting, as it does, one to the other, *i.e.* himself and household to the household in the spirit. To natural man this grotesque image of clay or wood is no mere toy, no senseless figure, that he moulds or carves for amusement during his hours of leisure, simply to kill time with.

"So this bundle of repressed but irrepressible emotions appeals to his household doll, as to an association—not in a merely abstract but in a personal sense, as a lifelong association, to which, connected and related as he is, from a twofold aspect, he is doubly bound. He appeals to it, as to a familiar object, embodying, as it does, his familiar and guardian spirit, not because he merely thinks or hopes this to be so, but because in all sincerity he feels and believes it to be the case. More than this, because he believes it to be the spirit of his father or grandfather, who, in accordance with the divine instructions, occupies the position of communicator and mediator between the human and spiritual households."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 384–85.

h "Small figures and images, such as are mentioned above, purporting and believed by the natives to contain the spirits of the defunct, and occupying exactly the same status as the Aryan 'Pitris' or 'Fathers' and the Roman Lares and Penates, are also made and venerated by all the Delta tribes. Food and liquid offerings are regularly placed on graves or at the monuments erected, or the symbols that have just been referred to, for the use of the departed spirits."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 183.

i *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "The priestly class and the *sumankwafo*, the doctors in *suman*, demanded for their professional purposes figures in human or animal forms; this resulted in the carving of *Sasabonsam*, *mmoatia* and, finally, human figures; in all of these the genius of the people found an outlet for latent artistic talent."
Religion and Art in Ashanti, p. 269.

42. *Memorial (second funeral)*

a *Farrow says of the Yoruba:* "In June of each year the Annual Egun festival is held, for seven days. It is the Yo-

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171 ruba 'All Souls' festival, when mourning is repeated for all those who have died during the last few years. Egungun is specially powerful in Ibadan, even as Oro is in Abeokuta."
Faith, Fancies and Fetich, pp. 79–80.

b *Leonard says of the Ibo and other tribes:* "*The Lamentation or Second Burial.*—This is conducted on much the same lines as the first, except that a greater entertainment is provided and the expenses incurred are heavier.

"In a spiritual sense, however, the rite is one of infinitely greater importance, because it is a special memorial service held over the deceased in order to release him from the thraldom of the region of the dead in which all souls are confined, where they exist on leaves or grass just like the brute beasts, and to usher him triumphantly, as befits his birth, into the abode of his fathers in the world of spirits.

"For the universal belief on this point is that no human soul can attain to the peaceful ancestral habitations without this rite of second burial. Hence the great aversion shown by a community towards those who fail to observe this holy sacrament."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, pp. 159–60.

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "The Ekwa-Ozu rites are commonly referred to in English as 'The Second Burial,' though there is no apparent reason for the use of this expression.

"The responsibility for performing the rites falls mainly on the principal heir, who should endeavour to carry them out within a year of the dead man's death. But the period may be extended, if the deceased's family has been unable to find the necessary means, and cases have occurred of the final funeral rites being postponed for as much as ten or twenty years."
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 314.

d *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "This first burial, generally called Mkpa Owo, is followed, from six months to two years later, by the Ewonga or Usiak Ekkpo, the second burial, with which the obsequies are completed and without

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which the deceased is thought to be unable to take his proper position in the realm of the dead."
Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 148.

43. *Mortars*

a *Monteiro says of Angola:* "These mortars are made of soft wood, mostly of the cotton wood tree, which is easily cut with a knife; for scooping out the interior of the mortars the natives use a tool made by bending round about an inch of the point of an ordinary knife, which they call a "locombo."
Angola and the River Congo, p. 167.

44. *Owl, hooting of*

a *Ellis says of the Vais:* "The Vais consider the owl the king of all witches. They believe that some old king transformed himself into the owl and became the king of witchcraft. The owl is called húhu. Whenever the cry of this bird is heard they tremble with fear. It is said when an owl sits upon a home at least one of its inmates is sure to die."
Negro Culture in West Africa, p. 66.

b *Nassau says of West Africa:* "Then, concerning owls; see that your camp at night is not disturbed by the cry of the Kulu (spirit of the departed), that warns you that one of you is going to die."
Fetichism in West Africa, pp. 195–96.

45. *Palm cabbage, palm wine*

a *Bridge says of the West Coast of Africa:* "Palm wine is the sap of the tree; and its top furnishes a most delicious dish, called palm-cabbage. The trunk supplies fire-wood and timber for building fences. From the fibres of the wood is manufactured a strong cordage, and a kind of native cloth; and the leaves, besides being used for thatching houses, are converted into hats. If nature had given the inhabitants of Africa nothing else, this one gift of the palm-tree would have included food, drink, clothing, and habitation,

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and the gratuitous boon of beauty, into the bargain."
Journal of an African Cruiser, p. 106.

b *Burton says of Gelele:* "The palm, after being felled, is allowed to lie for a couple of days, the cabbage is removed for food, and in its place a pipe, generally a bit of papaw-stalk, conducts the sap into the calabash below. At times, to make the juice flow more freely, a lighted stick is thrust into the hole, which is afterwards scraped clear of charred wood. This "toddy" is the drink of the maritime regions, where it is most impudently watered, and we shall not taste it beyond the Agrime swamp."
A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome, I, pp. 128–29.

46. *Possession*

a *Basden says of the Ibo:* "The more one listens to native music, the more one is conscious of its vital power. It touches the chords of man's inmost being, and stirs his primal instincts. It demands the performer's whole attention and so sways the individual as almost to divide asunder, for the time being, mind and body. . . . Under its influence, and that of the accompanying dance, one has seen men and women pass into a completely dazed condition, oblivious and apparently unconscious of the world around them."
Among the Ibos of Nigeria, p. 192.

b *Ellis says of the Gold Coast:* "The drums strike up, and the priest commences his dance, leaping, bounding, and turning and twisting round and round, until he works himself into a real or simulated condition of frenzy, with foam dropping from the mouth, and eyes wildly rolling."
The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 125.

c *Ellis says of the town of Forhudzi:* "A god was beginning to take possession of him. . . . In the meantime the trembling increased, and soon the priest was shuddering as if in an ague fit. Every portion of his body seemed to shake; the head, arms, legs, abdomen, and pectoral muscles, all quiver-

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ing violently. He leaned forward and appeared to be endeavoring to vomit, doubtless to give the idea that his body was struggling to expel the god which was now supposed to possess him. A little foam appeared on his lips, and from time to time saliva fell on the ground. Next, with open mouth and protruding tongue, and with eyes wildly rolling, he worked himself, still seated and quivering violently, into the middle of the arena." *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 132.*

d *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity, while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman 'mounted' by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun. One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics—rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede." *Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 146.*

e *Leonard says of the Ibo and other tribes:* "This possession by spirits, although not confined to any particular tribe or tribes in the Delta, is said to be much more common among the Ijo and Brassmen, and women are afflicted in a considerably greater proportion than men. These possessions—which are invariably made by the Owu or water spirit—may occur at any time, or in any place, and as soon as a woman jumps up and begins to talk a strange language—usually either Okrika or Kila—it is the first as it is a sure indication that she has become possessed. The fact that in many instances the obsessed person in her normal state is unable to speak the tongue which, when possessed, she speaks quite fluently, is naturally looked upon as direct evidence that it is the investing spirit who speaks and not the woman herself. So, too, a girl or woman who through excessive shyness is too coy to dance in public, develops, when under the influence of the Owu, an excess of boldness, which enables her to do things that under ordinary conditions she would not dream of doing. This boldness is to these natives merely the confirmation of a pre-existing conviction that it is not the person that is doing these things but the spirit who has invaded and obsessed her.

"It is further believed that persons so afflicted are possessed of physical strength which is altogether superhuman, so that when they become violent and uncontrollable they are scarcely to be overcome by half a dozen or more able-bodied men."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, pp. 227–28.

f *Meek says of the Yaku:* "As the dance proceeds they are one by one assailed with convulsive shiverings, wave their arms, strike themselves and throw themselves on the ground like demented persons."
A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 278.

47. *Possessions on grave*

a *Burton says of Dahome:* "At the end of the funeral customs, especially in the Old Calabar River, a small house is built upon the beach, and in it are placed the valuables possessed by the departed—some whole, and others broken,—statues, clocks, vases, porcelains, and so forth."
A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome, II, *p. 262.*

b *Nassau says of the Benga, the Mpongwe and the Fang:* "Formerly also slaves carried boxes of the dead man's goods, cloth, hardware, crockery, and so forth, to be laid by the body, which in those days was not interred, but was left on the top of the ground covered with branches and leaves."
Fetichism in West Africa, p. 218.

c *Talbot says of the Ibibio:* "Next a table and some of the finest pieces of household furniture, together with jars, dishes, and bowls of old china, were carried thither and set in order. When all had been arranged, the coffin was carefully

lowered down the shaft, borne through the passage and laid upon the resting-place so reverently prepared."
Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 154.

48. *Root doctors*

a *Cardinall says of the Gold Coast:* "With the belief that spiritual agents are the cause of misfortune and sickness, it follows that medical treatment consists generally in charms. There are certain men considered most proficient in the curative art. These are the *liri-tina* (Kassena), *tiindana* (Nankanni), *tinyam* (Builsa), (owner of medicine). Their medicines are drawn from the bush, and are usually bitter-tasting grasses, herbs, and barks. For poultices the same herbs are used mixed with shea-butter and charcoal and ashes. Usually they are covered with cow-dung. It is said that the stronger the smell the more easily will the evil spirit causing the sickness be driven away."
The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, p. 46.

b *Cruickshank says of the Gold Coast native:* "The natives of the Gold Coast have no despicable knowledge of the qualities of herbs. A collection of these was, at one time, sent home for analysis; and it was found generally that they possessed some qualities calculated to be of use in alleviating the diseases for which the natives applied them."
Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast, II, *147.*

c *Leyden says of the interior sections of West Africa, such as the Congo, the banks of the Senegal and the Gambia, etc.:* "The magicians appear to have been resorted to universally in cases of malady, which proved a hard trial on the faith even of the steadiest converts. When their children or near relations were seized with illness, they immediately began to cast a longing eye towards their old method of cure; and if they had not recourse to it, they even incurred reproach among their neighbors, as suffering their relation to die, rather than incur the expence of a magician."

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171 *Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Africa*, I, *120.*

d *Meek says of Nigeria:* "The believer in witchcraft feels he has a right to protect himself by every means in his power, and chief among these is the employment of a witch-doctor . . . [who] is therefore considered just as essential in most negro communities as a medical practitioner is amongst ourselves, and, though some witch-doctors may abuse their powers for selfish ends, as a class they are regarded as champions of morality."
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 345.

e *Nassau, quoting Menzies' History of Religion, p. 73, says of the Benja, the Mpongwe, the Fang, and other West African tribes:* " 'There is generally a special person in a tribe who knows these things, and is able to work them. He has more power over spirits than other men have, and is able to make them do what he likes. He can heal sickness, he can foretell the future, he can change a thing into something else, or a man into a lower animal, or a tree, or anything; he can also assume such transformations himself at will. He uses means to bring about such results; he knows about herbs, he has also recourse to rubbing, to making images of affected parts in the body, and to various other arts. . . . It is the spirit dwelling in him which brings about the wonderful results; without the spirit he could not do anything.' "
Fetichism in West Africa, pp. 86–87.

f *Ward says of the Bakongo tribes:* "It is a general belief with the Bakongo that all sickness is the result of witchcraft exercised by some member of the community, and the services of the charm-doctor are employed to discover the individual who is *ndoki, i.e.*, bedeviled, and guilty of devouring the spirit of the unfortunate invalid; and in the event of the sick person dying, the medicine-man is deputed by the relatives of the deceased to find out the witch who has 'eaten the heart.' "
Five Years with the Congo Cannibals, p. 39.

17 often serves, in the town, as a generic term for all the snake spirits, though the *Dagowe*, snake, properly speaking, is one of the constrictor group found in the colony, and is believed by the natives to inhabit both land and water. This is, of course, good observation on their part, for this characteristic of all snakes of the boa type is well-known. Not all snakes are sacred, yet no one will kill a snake."
Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 63–64.

e *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "Each great Ibibio Juju man is supposed to keep one such serpent familiar in his house, in the 'bush' where secret rites are celebrated, or in some place by the waterside. It is called Kukubarakpa, and, by virtue of this agent, much of the magician's power is said to come to him. The possession of a snake is also supposed to bring riches, though its magic is thought to be of no avail during the season of storms."
Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 17.

17\ 51. *Serpents, dream of*

a *Leonard says of Southern Nigeria:* "A snake seen in a dream implies a host of enemies seeking to destroy the dreamer's life. Nightmare is caused by the visitation of an evil or it may be antipathetic spirit."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 147.

52. *Sneezing*

a *Puckett says of the Ewe:* "Sneezing is regarded as a bad omen by the Ewe tribes of Africa because it indicates that the indwelling spirit is about to quit the body, affording an opportunity for a homeless spirit to enter in and cause illness. A similar belief leads the Calabar natives to exclaim, 'Far from you!' when a person sneezes, with an appropriate gesture as if throwing off some evil."
Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro, p. 453.

53. *Spider stories*

Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro: "Though few tales have been recorded, these play an impor-

tant role in the life of the Suriname Negroes. They are, whatever their nature, called *Anansi-tɔri*, the stories of Anansi, the Twi trickster-hero, who, like in Curaçao and Jamaica, has survived his migration to the western hemisphere to be here, as on the Gold Coast, the most important single character in the folk-tales of the Negroes of these regions."
Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 138.

54. *Spirits, animals*

a *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "The souls of the dead are sometimes reborn in animals, and occasionally, though but rarely, in plants."
The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 133.

b *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "*Baka* appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears (?) and dogs."
Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 241.

55. *Spirits, dwarfs*

a *Cardinall says of the Gold Coast:* "They are *kyikyiri* (Kassena), *kukru* (Builsa), and *chichirigu* (Nankanni). Sometimes they are visible to men, and in appearance resemble the *mmotia* of the Ashanti, ill-shapen dwarfs . . . they annoy travellers by night by 'throwing stones at them.' "
The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, pp. 27–28.

56. *Spirits, existence after death*

a *Campbell says of the Aku, Yoruba tribes:* "They believe in the spirit after death, and in its power of being present among the living for good or evil purposes."
A Pilgrimage to My Motherland, p. 75.

b *Cruickshank says of the Gold Coast native:* "They are unanimous in thinking that there is in man a spirit which survives the body. This spirit is supposed to remain near

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the spot, where the body has been buried. They believe it to have a consciousness of what is going on upon earth, and to have the power of exercising some influence over their destiny."
Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa, II, 135.

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "As in Africa, the spirit of the dead is powerful for good or evil, and the rites of death must be carried out as tradition demands, so that the dead man may feel he has received honor among the living and proper introduction to the world of the dead."
Rebel Destiny, p. 4.

57. *Spirits, faces turned backward*

a *Cardinall says of the Gold Coast:* ". . . the spirits turned their faces to the back of the head."
The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, p. 34.

58. *Spirit, food for*

a *Cole says of West Africa:* "The spirits of the dead, as well as genii, are also honored and adored. Food, tobacco, and rum are placed on the graves for the departed, and their aid is requested at the taking of a journey, or in times of need."
A Revelation of the Secret Orders of Western Africa, p. 39.

b *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Food is brought in the dishes from which the dead ate when alive, and each meal is given to the *akɔvi* on guard, who takes three morsels and puts them down one after the other near the corpse. She also allows water to drop three times nearby, and then tells the wife of the deceased to gather up and remove everything that has been put down. The dead man's pipe must now be placed next to him; tobacco is put into it, and it is smoked for the enjoyment of the dead man by the *akɔvi* and the wife who watch the body."
Dahomey, I, 356.

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c *Hutchinson says of the Efik:* "Amongst the Efik tribe, who are the residents here, there exists a practice of cooking food and leaving it on the table of a fabric called the 'devil house,' which is erected near the grave of a man or woman. The food is placed there in calabashes, and it is believed that the spirit of the deceased, with those of the butchered serfs who are her or his fellow-travelers, frequently came to partake of it in their journey to the world of spirits, whither they are supposed to be travelling."
Ten Years' Wanderings Among the Ethiopians, pp. 206–07.

d *Nassau says of West Africa:* "When affairs are going wrong in the villages, and the people do not know the cause, offerings of food and drink are taken to the grave to cause the spirit to cease disturbing them, and prayers are made to it that it may the rather bless them."
Fetichism in West Africa, p. 220.

e *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "An Ashanti never drinks without pouring a few drops of the wine on the ground for the denizens of the spirit world who may happen to be about (also some for 'fetishes'). Food is constantly placed aside for them."
Ashanti Proverbs, p. 37.

f "If you see your ancestor in a dream lying dead, as he did on the day of his death, then you know that there is going to be another death in your clan; otherwise, to be visited by an ancestor only means that he is hungry and you place food upon his stool."
Religion and Art in Ashanti, pp. 193–94.

59. *Spirits and ghosts, general*

a *Kingsley says of the West Coast of Africa:* "Accounts of apparitions abound in all the West Coast districts, and although the African holds them all in high horror and terror, he does not see anything supernatural in his 'Duppy.' It is a horrid thing to happen on, but there is nothing strange about it, and he is ten thousand times more frightened than puzzled over the affair. He does not want to 'investigate' to see whether there is anything in it. He wants to get clear away, and make ju-ju against it, 'one time.'

"These apparitions have a great variety of form, for, firstly, there are all the true spirits, nature spirits; secondly, the spirits of human beings—these human spirits are held to exist before as well as during and after bodily life; thirdly, the spirits of things."
Travels in West Africa, p. 509.

b *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "When going home late from *winti*-dances, we were led away from certain thoroughfares, and went a roundabout way to avoid a corner, or a tree, or a house, because these were known to be 'bad' places,—that is to say, they were haunted. At least two persons accompanied us home, so that, in returning to their own homes, they would not have to walk the streets alone. The hours that are dangerous are mid-day, from 5:30 to 6:30 in the evening, and from 12:30 to 1:30 at night."
Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 111.

c *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "Sasabonsám. Deriv. *bonsam,* a devil, or evil spirit (*not* the disembodied soul of any particular person, just as the fetish is not a human spirit). Its power is purely for evil and witchcraft. The *obayifo* is perhaps its servant, as the terms are sometimes synonymous."
Ashanti Proverbs, p. 47.

60. *Spirit, guardian of entrance* (*Legba*)

a *Herskovits says of Haiti:* ". . . they proceeded slowly to the gateway, where a ceremony was held for Legba, the guardian of entrances, that he might permit the other *loa* to pass."
Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 172–73.

b "Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observances of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrances are usu-

ally for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances."
Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 286.

61. *Spirit, guardian of buried treasure*

a *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "*Baka* are often employed to guard buried money. 'In this country, when you find money buried in jars, it is an affair of *baka*. There is never one jar, but always two or three, and you must call a *hungan* to find out which one you may take and which you must not touch. Generally the finder is allowed to take half of the treasure, for if he took all he would be tormented by the *baka* who had been left as guardian. Such jars, it is said, are usually found with human bones beside them or under them, and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner never returned, the spirit of the slave, as a 'sold *baka*,' remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge."
Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 242–43.

62. *Spirits, plat-eye*

[775] a *Johnson says of St. Helena:* "In the Georgetown section plat-eye is used to signify a ghost or spook. Its etymology is uncertain, and it may be an instance of an Africanism surviving in a restricted area."
Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, p. 58.

b *Nassau says of West Africa:* "Another manifestation is that of the uvengwa. . . . It is the self-resurrected spirit and body of a dead human being. It is an object of dread, and is never worshipped in any manner whatever. Why it appears is not known. Perhaps it shows itself only in a restless, unquiet, or dissatisfied feeling. It is white in color, but the body is variously changed from the likeness of the original human body. Some say that it has only one eye, placed

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in the centre of the forehead. Some say that its feet are webbed like an aquatic bird. It does not speak; it only wanders, looking as if with curiosity."
Fetichism in West Africa, p. 71.

63. *Spirits, river*

a *Cardinall says of the Gold Coast:* "Spirits of rivers and water-holes are greatly respected. They are most powerful spirits, too. They can slay men and they can bring much good fortune. To them are brought many sacrifices of fowls and goats, etc. It is said that these spirits live below the river-bed."
The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, p. 34.

b *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Paramaribo Negro:* "A fourth group of *winti* are those which are associated with the river. This group, as all others, overlap the Snake gods, since the constrictor lives in the water as well as on land. However, there are other gods, among them the *kaimq*, which are peculiar to the rivers alone. The river-gods are headed by the *Liba-Mama*, or *Watra-Mama*, respectively Mother of the River, or Mother of the Water, who, again, is not referred to by name. Among the Saramacca tribe of Bush-Negroes, the river-gods go under the generic name of Tone, and this name, like the name from the interior for the gods in general, is also sometimes employed in Paramaribo."
Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 64–65.

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "At Eha-Amufu (Nsukka Division) there is a river-cult, the priest of which is known as the Atama Ebe. Ebe is the spirit of the river and controls the fish, who are regarded as the spiritual counterparts of the inhabitants of Eha-Amufu. The big fish are the counterparts of the principal men of the village group, while the fry are the counterparts of persons of no consequence. When a villager dies a fish dies, and when a fish dies a villager dies. It is taboo, therefore, to catch fish in the river, and

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much annoyance has been caused by visits of foreign fishermen who disregard the local scruples. Ebe, the spirit of the river, being the guardian of the fish, which are his children and messengers, is regarded as the giver of children to men, and is thus the object of public and private worship."
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 38.

64. *Stealing from grave*

a *Nassau says of the interior tribes of the West Coast:* "A noticeable fact about these gifts to the spirits is that, however great a thief a man may be, he will not steal from a grave. The coveted mirror will lie there and waste in the rain, and the valuable garment will flap itself to rags in the wind, but human hands will not touch them. Sometimes the temptation to steal is removed, by the donor fracturing the article before it is laid on the grave."
Fetichism in West Africa, p. 232.

65. *Taboos*

a *Bosman says of Guinea:* "Each Person here is forbidden the eating of one sort of Flesh or other; one eats no Mutton, another no Goats-Flesh, Beef, Swines-Flesh, Wild-Fowl, Cocks with white feathers, &c. This Restraint is not laid upon them for a limited time, but for their whole Lives: And if the Romanists brag of the Antiquities of their Ecclesiastical Commands; so if you ask the Negroes why they do this, they will readily tell you, because their Ancestors did so from the beginning of the World and it hath been handed down from one Age to another by Tradition. The Son never eats what the Father is restrained from, as the Daughter herein follows the Mother's Example; and this Rule is as strictly observed amongst them, that 'tis impossible to persuade them to the contrary."
Description of the Coast of Guinea, pp. 154–55.

b *Burton says of the Dahomean:* "Some are allowed to eat beef, others only mutton; many are prohibited to touch the flesh of goats. Poultry is permitted to some, eggs to others."
A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome, II, *361–62.*

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• 171 c *Ellis says of the Ewe:* "The usual reverence is paid by the members of a clan to the animal or plant from which the clan takes its name. It may not be used as food, or molested in any way; but must always be treated with veneration and respect. The general notion is that the members of the clan are directly descended from the animal, or plant, eponymous."
The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 100.

d *Ellis says of the Tshi:* "With some races the reverence originally felt for the deceased ancestor, and in later times transferred to the animal for which he was named, culminates in the animal being regarded as a tutelary deity, and consequently a being to be worshipped and propitiated by sacrifice; but in other cases—and this is almost always the case with the family divisions of the natives of the Gold Coast—an abstention from the use of the flesh of the animal whose name the family bears, is sometimes the only remaining sign of any feeling of reverence or respect."
The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 206.

e *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "An illness may be caused by . . . an unconscious violation, arising out of the fact that a man's mother had never told him the name of his true father, and consequently he had been observing food taboos which were not his own and had been neglecting to observe those which were his, since, as we have seen, these personal food taboos are inherited from the father."
Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 59–60.

17 66. *Teeth, children born with*

a *Meek says of Nigeria:* "Children born feet first or with teeth or any deformity were also destroyed, on the ground that they were incarnations of evil spirits."
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, pp. 290–91.

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68. *Witches, animal form*

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a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "The *azɔndato*, as such practitioners are called, are spoken of in whispers, and are said to be organized into a close guild. They exercise power over the souls of those who have not had proper burial and therefore wander about the earth discontented, and over these souls procured by 'killing' their owners in the manner described above. These *azɔndato* are to be recognized by their blood-shot eyes, and Dahomeans stealthily point out two or three such persons in the market-place who usually may be remarked to be doing somewhat better business than those who sit near them. These dangerous individuals change into bats at night, or assume other animal forms and go forth to hold council together or to perform their dark deeds."
Dahomey, II, *287*.

b *Meek says of Nigeria:* "Witches (*amozu*) and wizards (*ogboma*) have also animal counterparts, and so assume the forms of owls, lizards, vultures, and numerous species of night-birds. Consequently, if a night-bird comes and rests on a house, the owner loses no time in trying to drive it away or shoot it; and if he fails he will seize his *ofo* and call on his ancestors or any local deity to rid him of his enemy. A witch always assails at night. By magic means she attacks the throat, so that the victim is paralysed and cannot move or speak, and in the morning may be found lying senseless and naked outside his hut. . . . Witches can penetrate into a house through the smallest cracks in the wall, and can assume the form of the smallest insect. Flies and other creatures which bite are witches or the agents of witches, and if a person is severely bitten he may consult a diviner, who will order the patient to offer sacrifice to propitate some witch, and induce the witch to remove the spell by transferring it to some one else. Witches can poison food or infect it with sorcery, and if any one eats a meal cooked by a witch he will become seriously ill or die. Moth-

ers, therefore, advise their children to avoid eating food outside their own homes."
Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, pp. 79–80.

c *Talbot says of Southern Nigeria:* "Witches often change into leopards and other animals."
The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, II, *219.*

d "Witchcraft seems to have been more dreaded in the Oru clan than among any other Ibo. . . . They can change into crocodiles, fish, leopards, bush-cows, snakes and goats."
The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, II, *213.*

e *Farrow says:* "The witch-doctor is, of course, a privileged person. He is called in to trace the source of disease and death, for these are generally attributed to witchcraft, unless they are evidently caused by the vengeance of Shopono (smallpox), Shango, or some similar deity. Various forms of disease are described as 'snakes inside' (*ejo-inu*), 'an insect' (*kokoro*), etc., and it is supposed that these have been introduced by a foe through the agency of witchcraft."
Faith, Fancies and Fetish, p. 125.

69. *Witches, riding victims*

a *Ellis says of the Vais:* "There is a belief, as I have stated, among the Vais that witches come to your house and ride you at night,—that when the witch comes in the door he takes off his skin and lays it aside in the house. It is believed that he returns you to the bed where he found you, and that the witch may be killed by sprinkling salt and pepper in certain portions of the room, which will prevent the witch from putting on his skin. Just before they go to bed it is a common thing to see Vais people sprinkling salt and pepper about the room."
Negro Culture in West Africa, p. 63.

b *Leonard says:* "In Brass the natives firmly believe that witches exist, and that certain persons by natural operations—or rather by co-operation with natural forces—possess the power of inflicting disease, injury, or death upon their neighbours. These individuals are divided into two classes—the harmful and the harmless.

"The former are said to go out of their houses at night, and to hold meetings with demons and their colleagues, to determine whose life is next to be destroyed. This is done by gradually sucking the blood of the victim through some supernatural and invisible means the effect of which on the victim is imperceptible to others."
The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 486.

c *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "Men and women possessed of this black magic are credited with volitant powers, being able to quit their bodies and travel great distances in the night. Besides sucking the blood of victims, they are supposed to be able to extract the sap and juices of crops."
Ashanti Proverbs, p. 48.

70. *Woodcarving and weaving*

a *Herskovits says:* "In West Africa, the development of techniques of all kinds is the greatest on the continent. The Benin bronzes, the brass-work of Dahomey, the weaving of the Ashanti, or the wood carving of the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, and Nigeria are famous, while pottery of a high grade, basketry, and iron work are found everywhere."
Social History of the Negro, p. 221.

b *Herskovits says of the Bush Negro:* "In the villages of the Bush Negroes the artist holds an enviable position, and the good carver is sought after in marriage and often wins the most desirable young woman for his wife. This is because Suriname woodcarving is a part of all phases of life."
Social History of the Negro, p. 247.

c *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "But, as stated, the greatest proportion of objects are intended for some specific end. The spotted hyena, for example, formed a handle for the staff of a chief. The two wands with human figures on them are employed in the Fá cult. The three figures in the background of the same plate, representing a woman, an animal,

and a bird respectively, support cups which hold the seeds employed in the Fate cult. . . ."
Dahomey, II, *370*.

d "Wood-carving is the most democratic, and the most widely practiced, of all the arts. It constitutes the one mode of artistic expression open to all men in Dahomey, for, as in many cultures, wood-carving is not a technique permitted to women. In addition, however, to the democratic nature of the art it pervades the daily life of the people to a greater degree than any other art-form, and a catalogue of the uses to which the objects carved in wood are put by the Dahomeans would touch upon all elements of Dahomean culture. Carvings thus catalogued would range from the artistic statuettes found in the shrines of the gods and the smaller human figures used as *gbŏ*, the beautifully carved cups which hold the palm-kernels employed in the Fá cult, and the carefully worked handles of the Xevioso axes, all of which indicate the association of wood-carving with religion, to the mortars, stools, and other decorated objects used in the everyday round of life."
Dahomey, II, *363*.

e "Among these forms are plastic and graphic arts, music, dancing and a wide range of oral literature. In the former group wood-carving is the most widespread and the most commonly practised. As will be indicated in detail below, carvings in wood enter many phases of life. Statues of the gods, human forms which, as *gbŏ*, protect the owner and his household, and the implements of the Fate cult, are all a part of the religious life. The sceptres of King and chiefs, and the elaborately carved stools on which they sat were indispensable symbols of rank and succession. The wands of office and stools of sib-chiefs associate this art with social organisation, especially where the totem animal is figured, while even the *adji* game-boards of the Dahomeans are embellished by the carvings of the artist."
Dahomey, II, *311*.

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APPENDIX

171 **f *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "There were other carvings which we bought —a large rice-carrying tray, and some food stirrers, one of which was especially fine, made as it was of two small paddles with miniature blades, the handles joined by a wooden ring-chain, and all of this carved out of one piece of wood."**
Rebel Destiny, p. 277.

g "Few things on the river seemed to the outsiders more characteristic of the life of the Saramacca people than these carvings which were met with everywhere, however small the village, however poor the home. When the seasonal rains came, men incised their desires on wood, which later told the legend of procreation, or safety on the river, or a curse invoked against a woman if she proved unfaithful; or something of humor, such as a man bidding for a girl's favor, and she refusing him, while up above intertwined were a man and woman, symbolizing the ultimate consummation with the proper suitor."
Rebel Destiny, pp. 277–78.

h *Talbot says of the Sudanese tribes:* "Carving in wood is common among all tribes, but is for the most part rather crude. In all cases articles were as far as possible made from the solid block; never nailed or glued together."
The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, III, 928.

i "The varieties of woven work include checker, twilled and wicker; others are plaited, and there are several sorts of coiled basketry. The oblong market baskets used by the women, particularly among the Ibo and many of the Semi-Bantu tribes, closely resemble those of the Ancient Egyptians."
The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, III, 938.

[p. 250 is blank]

491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling
around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before
342 leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are
[177] large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum
siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and
the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid
these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses,
gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that
have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses
are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by
the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that
[827] the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place,
even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has
been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has
[356] been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and orderly—a
remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as
[592] ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

351 Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to
share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is
•171 swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was
once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

423 175 tion, General W. T. Sherman issued his famous Field Order No. 15: "The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the Negroes."[22]

175 241 [243] From the earliest days the islanders tended to be self-sufficient agriculturally. The landowners—black or white—harvested mainly indigo and long-staple cotton, commodities that thrived well on the rich island soil. Rice, by 1724 one of the most profitable staple commodities in the mainland coastal areas,[23] was not grown to any great extent on the islands.[24]

175 243 •171 Peter Wood writes convincingly that the West Africans were primarily responsible for the economic success of the flourishing rice crops in the Carolina territory. The cultivation, growth, and processing of rice is an old tradition in West Africa. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rice was grown in most West African areas, and especially heavily near the Gambia River. In the Congo-Angola region, a white explorer once noted that rice was so plentiful that it brought no price at all. During this period West Africans actually sold rice to the slave traders to stock their ships.[25]

243 171 Unlike the Europeans, then, who knew little about rice, the transplanted Africans were widely familiar with its cultivation. In fact, rice was so important a part of African culture that its growth and harvest were celebrated each year, just as the growing of yams was celebrated in "yam festivals."[26] In West Africa today there is still a kind of symbolism associated with rice and yams: they are much more than just food to be consumed.[27] Rice continues to be a primary food in both West Africa and the Sea Islands, and its preparation and offering tend to be expressions of fine taste and "good eating."[28]

248 Until recent years the primary Sea Island commodity was long-staple cotton, a crop that thrives only in light, sandy, saltwater lands. Because of its fine silky texture, it brought excellent prices on the world market, and it was grown along the Atlantic coast from the Santee River of South Carolina to the Florida Everglades.[29] The rapid expansion of cotton production on the islands, as elsewhere, was a major factor in the great demand for West African slaves to work the fields. Perhaps because cotton was a crop new to the slaves, or because the growth and harvest of an inedible crop did not offer the familiar gratification associated with rice, or merely because of the connection

463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have
to be built by the islanders themselves.

285 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often reflect
African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the region,
178 and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States.
463 The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing
rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These
were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such
materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers
still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested
in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful
[531] but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show baskets
have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigantic
woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African
[177] utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses
trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent.
Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the
South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional
designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and
museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are
purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient
African craft.

285 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina
coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable
171 collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and
final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of
Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique,
the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an
agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal,
though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient
to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique
and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons
is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans
[178] were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea
Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the
African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them,
it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

285 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with
868 the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

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858 Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the
[581) couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless
(847) of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare
and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a
592 young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new
855 one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the
887 care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians
of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and
good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for
whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves,
or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children
855 are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is
not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block
from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps
848 childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of
wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These
855 children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate
children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family
as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in
795 the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow
796 the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus
based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in
779 the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many
774 elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into
body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person
has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According
775 to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul
returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth.
774 And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the
spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body
• (170) and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living,
is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not
conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and
the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the
person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual
entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

763 them to take over the policies, and the children, knowing the impor-
456 tance of proper burial, usually do so gladly.

When an islander has moved away and then died, every possible
764 effort is made to return the body to the island for burial among relatives
and friends. The desire to be buried at home is also very common
(171) among the Igbo, Yoruba, and other Nigerian peoples, who believe
[775] without question that the dead are dependent on their ancestors for
spiritual nourishment and thus must be buried among them to find
peace.[50] By ongoing tradition, Sea Island burial places are densely
wooded and are considered to be the sacred abodes of the spirits.

A burial tradition once practiced widely on the Sea Islands and in
764 rural areas of the deep South, though it is now dying out, is the placing
775 of articles such as pottery, spoons, dishes, and other items belonging to
(178) the deceased person on the grave, in case the deceased might need or
want them in afterlife. Even those scholars hesitant to ascribe other
practices observed on the islands to African influences have readily
accepted the African basis of this tradition.[51] I have seen the same
[171] practices among the Igbo and Ibebio, and it was at one time not unusual in West Africa for boxes of the dead person's possessions—clothes, hardware, and crockery, for example—to be laid by the body, which was not interred but left on top of the ground and covered with branches and leaves.[52]

On the Sea Islands children's graves were traditionally decorated
764 with favorite toys, broken glasses and cups, and money banks always
containing a few pennies. The islanders could not explain why the
glasses and cups were broken before they were put on a grave. Some
said that it was done to decrease the chance of someone's stealing the
items; others commented they were merely copying what they had always seen done. The old customs, however, are now being replaced
(178) for both children and adults by the use of fancy headstones and cement
vaults, which have come to be thought more prestigious signs of one's
love for the deceased person.

Sea Island funerals are often very sad and solemn occasions, but they are also very emotional, as are most of the religious services. People attend a funeral to pay their respects to the deceased, but even more to pay their respects to the deceased's family. Each person is given a funeral as elaborate as the family and friends can make it, and the church is packed as full for the funeral of a young child as it would

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796 starts slowly and softly, gradually increasing in tempo while the shouters
533 strive to keep up with it; it becomes louder and faster until they are
786 totally spent.

The call-and-response style is still the tradition of worship in Sea
796 Island churches, just as it is in most southern black churches. The
794 minister calls out a statement, and the congregation repeats it or gives a
rhythmic and raucous reply. Though many of the men act as responders
786 to the ministers, few shout or become "happy" as many of the women
do. However, those who do join in the movements of the shout do so
with considerable zeal. These frenzied shouts are related to the prac-
● [191] tices of certain African religious cults.[55] In 1904 a woman wrote of her
encounters with the spirituals and shouts of the Sea Islands and asked
an inhabitant what explained them. The respondent replied that when
the preacher read from the Bible how those "dry bones ter lib ergin,"
something deep within her would come to life and she would begin to
holler and sing some old "shout" song from Africa.[56] I observed sim-
[191] ilar call-and-response services in Nigeria: though I could not always
understand what was being said in the language of the service, I found
that I could nevertheless join in singing the reply.

178 Today there are many customs and practices unique to the Sea Islands and to parts of Africa which offer investigators rich insights into African and African-American traditions. The Sea Island language and oral literature did not develop and survive apart from the social and cultural environment which produced them. The extended family household and the Sea Island burial customs, religious beliefs, and styles of worship are no less evidence of African roots and preservations than is the language itself. As long as these roots remain viable, the Sea Island people will maintain their cultural integrity; only when such traditional roots die will their culture die. I hope that an awareness of these influences upon the culture will aid in understanding the African influences upon the language and literature discussed in the following chapters.

538 (201) monkey from the ground far below (see "The Buzzard and the Monkey" in Chapter 3), the audience shares the imbalance and giddiness that the monkey feels. With varying degrees of animation, the teller can, like the writer, hypnotize his listeners and compel them to suspend any disbelief and fully participate in the events of the tale. But unlike the written word, which can be enjoyed in solitude, whenever and for however long the reader may wish, effective oral presentation is dependent on many factors that are peripheral to the tale itself. The occasion on which a tale is told, the audience to which it is told, and the style and technique of the person doing the telling, among other factors, cannot be ignored in attempting to read written versions of tales which are meant to be presented orally. These external forces are as much a part of oral literature as character development and tightly knit plot are of written literature.

The Setting

538 177 The Sea Island tradition has been to tell tales (called "lies" by the islanders) as a form of entertainment. The advent of bridges and electricity, however, has brought about significant changes in the occasions for telling folktales. On more remote islands storytelling is still a common practice, and it is still fairly easy to get a "telling" started. On the more industrialized islands television, with its talking pictures, has all but eliminated the need for oral literature as a form of entertainment. Yet, given the choice, most children seem to favor human contact with a person who really knows how to perform a tale over being entertained by television.

538 517 (171) In Africa and on the Sea Islands folktelling is an informal social event with no set place for telling or listening to tales. Any place where people often congregate to talk, or just to sit and listen, is a good place for a telling to begin. I collected some tales under trees, in open fields, riding in the back of pickup trucks, and while shark fishing. Others I obtained at island stores, around fire sites, at juke joints, in front of fireplaces, on front porches, and down on the creek banks. I heard still others in the comfort and privacy of the tellers' homes. All but the last were places where people congregated and the teller had enough people for an audience response.

On rainy days, which are prevalent on the islands owing to their

538 517 subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa), (264) yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a (273) result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo, (171) Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

538 Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than (196) one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

538 462 There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island storytelling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup.
Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy
of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba,
[171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although
alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the
Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myrna, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
123 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so
and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures,
and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me
to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to
come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised
primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate
[562] in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities.
Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities,
only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can
participate in such activities without fear of censure.

Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during
538 the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the
461 daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One
elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained
me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he
resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should
live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very re-
593 cently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children,
grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty
located behind the main house and near the other homes within his
yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

592 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his
593 granddaughter has continued the practice.

538 Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 177 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 857 171 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 517 461 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories. But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

596 to their families and neighbors and appear to enjoy companionship and
group cooperation more than solitude and isolation. This social sharing
538 and seeming congeniality is as vivid in their literature as it is in their
daily lives. An overt expression of group participation is witnessed in
the interplay between speaker and audience in folktales, speeches, and
sermons. In Sea Island public speaking, the audience is as important
for a good performance as the performer himself. As in Africa, the best
audience is a lively audience: one in which the listeners participate
actively in the narration by responding to certain cues from the
performer. In really exciting performances speaker and audience become
so intermeshed and such oneness is achieved that it may appear that the
response is an actual part of the tale itself. This is particularly true, of
course, for tales well known to both audience and performer.

538 Unless tales are told in the privacy of a home with very few
listeners, the speaker will rarely begin a performance without some
171 "warming up." Among the Igbo and Ibebio, for example, formal
folktales are preceded by songs and selected tales called (in Igbo)
akuko eji awake nti, which means the first tale told to awaken or to
enlighten the ear so that it absorbs the real meaning of what follows.
Among the Igbo, before any tale begins, the speaker greets his listeners by saying "Chakpii [Are you ready?]." And the listeners respond, "Haa [We are ready to welcome your story!]." (These words are repeated at the end of each story, where they may be read as, respectively, "My story has ended" and "Thank you, storyteller, for your tale.") While the islanders do not seem to have any tale prescribed for the sole purpose of opening telling sessions, they do have some patterns for preparing to tell informal folktales.

538 The timing and atmosphere are very important to telling, hearing,
and collecting good tales. If the audience is not properly prepared, the occasion is not conducive to good tales. The atmosphere must be relaxed; the teller not only must be willing to tell a tale but must have an audience and sufficient time to tell the story. The more listeners, the better the tales seem to be. In large groups, even when a storytelling event has been planned, it often takes quite a while for a session to begin. The pattern seems to be that everyone in the group will at first pretend not to know any stories, or even how to tell one. If it is known that one of the people in the group is a good performer, then someone may point him out and ask him to tell a tale. He of course refuses.

538 Then members of the group may sit and tease each other for a while, telling jokes, playing the dozens, taking a little nip, or just sitting and [522 enjoying one another's company. When I was there, after the group had kidded around until everyone was laughing and in a fairly con- [123] genial mood, I was usually granted permission to turn the recorder on, and it was time to tell some tales.

[533] With older storytellers, the sessions often begin with a song, religious or otherwise. During the singing, the members of the group join in enthusiastically, singing, clapping their hands, or swaying with the rhythm. After the song ends, the audience is usually ready to hear a good tale. Regardless of the ages of the members of the group, the most impressive stories are always told after the group has had a chance to talk, kid around, play the dozens, sing, or just be "sporty." The friendly teasing and cordial verbal exchange relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the listeners so that they will participate in the telling of the tales by responding to certain cues given by the performers.

A speaker may begin his tale by indicating that he is going to tell a story about Ber Rabbit. The audience (or a given respondent) may clap their hands, laugh, and rock back and forth to indicate their interest and repeat, "Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit!" This response demonstrates that the speaker has engaged their interest and attention and that they are now prepared to hear his tale. As the tale progresses, if the teller is entertaining and effective, the listeners will continue to respond to his every word, laughing and joking, clapping their hands, and urging him on with his tale. The audience is not a captive one; if the teller is not skilled in narrative technique, and his tale or delivery is uninteresting, then the listeners may wander away to get something to drink or talk to others and return only when a better speaker is talking. This response undoubtedly has an effect on the teller, who may try to hurry and finish his story so that someone else can have a turn.

Most audiences react to onomatopoeic words, repetitions, and chants. They respond as a chorus by repeating some of the speaker's words or phrases in unison or singularly. A practice very common both in Africa and on the Sea Islands is an interplay between the speaker and a given member of the audience. In an Igbo village, for example, [171] Raphael Amaugo often called on his friend Cornelius Onunwa to help him remember the details of a story that Raphael knew quite well. The

538 call for assistance is a device to keep the audience abreast of the details by pretending that some part of the tale has been temporarily forgotten. Often the member of the audience called upon will reply, "That's the way it happened" or "You are telling it right!" Even if the speaker is not telling a story in just the way a member of the audience remembers it, seldom will anyone openly dispute the manner in which the tale is told. This is apparently an unwritten rule of courtesy of both Igbo and Gullah cultures.

In addition to pretending to forget, a speaker may turn to a particular respondent, call him by name, and ask, for example, "You know what I mean, don't you, Doc?" The Sea Island respondent may then answer, "Ki! I know what you mean, man!" This is a reassuring device for both speaker and audience because the other members as well will usually answer, "I know what you mean! I know what you mean!" Likewise, in the narration of a historical event, members of the audience who are familiar with the event may inject a word of understanding or support by adding a personal comment, such as "I remember . . . I remember the place." The audience may encourage the speaker by calling out, "Tell the story . . . tell the story!"

Another practice characteristic of Gullah and Igbo, Yoruba, and
• [171] Ibebio speakers in particular is that of telling a tale seemingly for one
individual. A speaker may single out a person whom he knows, or one
whom he may not know well, and seem to speak directly to this per-
son, ignoring all others. He has eye contact with this one hearer alone
538 and may even turn his back to other members of the audience sitting
209 next to him. This turning of the back is fairly common in some West
(171) African communities and is apparently not a discourteous practice; I
have never seen it offend any member of the groups observed. In fact,
two informants on the Sea Islands who are close friends and avid story-
tellers often turn their backs to each other or sit sideways so that they
are neither facing nor sitting directly next to each other. When they tell
[201] tales, each one acts as a respondent for the other, yet they turn around
only when some point to be stressed requires the use of the hands as a
209 visual aid. In most Western cultures, turning one's back to another
person is an overt sign of disregard or disrespect. In Sea Island com-
munities, however, one can observe this behavior in churches or other
gathering places. Two men will often sit on each end of a church bench
in such a manner that their backs are turned slightly away from each

209 other. During the entire course of a sermon, they will turn around only to nod agreement to each other, to say, "Amen," or just to recognize each other's presence before resuming their former positions. This behavior is observed more often in men than in women or children, though I have seen it in young boys during the course of a storytelling event in Nigeria and on the Sea Islands.

538 171 The expectation of audience participation among Sea Island and Nigerian audiences contrasts rather sharply with the behavioral expectations of most Western audiences, who sit in silence, not necessarily because they do not enjoy the message of the speaker but because silence is a cultural sign of respect and courtesy. It is not known whether responding is characteristic of all African or related cultures, but Ruth Finnegan relates an identical practice, "replying," used by the Limba speakers of northern Sierra Leone: the audience assists the speaker by answering, "Me!" According to Finnegan, replying

> also refers to the actions of the listeners when someone is making a formal speech; they should not interrupt the flow of his presentation but should "reply" to his argument, perhaps by echoing his words or answering his rhetorical questions, perhaps by only a grunt or murmur at suitable intervals; in this way they are thought to play the important part of supporting or noting his main points as they are made. "Replying" in song is also an important practice, applied in particular to the way in which the women as a group reply in chorus to the song of a soloist, and in this way take an essential part in the whole activity.[11]

538 571 171 The practice of listener response in communicative events not only is common in storytelling, sermons, and speeches but is a vivid part of daily social interaction in Igbo, Ibebio, Yoruba, and Sea Island communities. The act of responding is a method of showing approval and understanding—or disapproval or misunderstanding.

538 For a speaker's listeners to be verbally responsive to his cues during the time he is speaking is a very good indication that they agree with or understand what he says. If they sit quietly and do not respond verbally during the course of the speaking event, then the speaker can be assured that they have either not enjoyed his presentation or not understood what has been said. Thus understanding the importance of

159 expression has meaning, so does the absence of movement. Though
539 Mr. Oree held himself nearly still, making gestures only to emphasize
a point in an episode, he held his audience captive through story after
story.

The language Mr. Oree used is characteristic of contemporary
Gullah speech on Wadmalaw Island. He did not get formal education
beyond the tenth grade, and he has no desire for social prestige on the
island. Thus he has felt little if any need to adapt his speech to conform
to that of the more affluent, better-educated, rising social class. In his
[177] tales one finds the influence of outside social forces in some of the
words used, but much of the content, structure, and language of the
tales remain unquestionably Gullah, and most probably African in
origin.

159 *Mr. Henry Gibbs*, one of the oldest members of his community, is
now approximately one hundred. Until recent years he was always an
active member of his church. He is a fairly well-educated man, reads
and writes very well, can see well enough to plow a garden each year
with his favorite mule, but can hear only when he takes a "notion" to
do so. He is always serious and majestic in manner and appearance.
Likewise, his oratory is always on matters he feels to be grave, profound, historical, and factual. He will tolerate no discussions of trivia.
He told me that he participated in the Marcus Garvey movement and
that he can remember his parents talking about "slavery and the 'buckra' [white man] as good as yesterday." He claims to know every family
on Wadmalaw Island and most of those on adjoining islands. He is held
in grand esteem and awe by his family, friends, and neighbors. Mr.
[592] Henry's life-style is somewhat unusual: he keeps all of his belongings
in his shanty, located centrally to his wife's home and to his children's
and grandchildren's homes. He prefers the solitude of his own house,
he says, so that he can think and reflect without being disturbed by
• [171] noises from his family. His choice is reminiscent of the separate living
quarters characteristic in traditional Igbo, Yoruba, and other West African cultures.

159 Mr. Henry's narrative style is more descriptive than some Sea Islanders', but this distinction is perhaps related to the subject matter of
539 his narratives, primarily legends and historical accounts, the nature of
which requires a certain seriousness in presentation. This personal

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And Christ step up and say,
"On this rock I build my church!" *Uh hum!*

And Peter say, "OOO! Hell no!!!" *(Much laughter, cheering, and clapping from the audience)*
"You bina make (laughing),
you bina—you bina make bread all the time on the other rock!!"
Tell em, "You gone make bread now cause I got a BIG rock!
You gone make bread with this rock!!!" *(Much clapping and urging from the listeners to tell another tale)*

That's it now—I got some more, but I'll tell y'all later!

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Three Gullah Tales with African Parallels

Hear tell say Ber Rabbit ben come here from Africa.

The Gullah tales with African parallels that are included here are only a minute sampling of tales on the Sea Islands having roots in African literary traditions. The student of comparative literature can discover topics for extensive comparisons from the collections of Joel Chandler Harris, Elsie Clews Parsons, Ruth Finnegan, Florence Cronise and Henry Ward, and Richard Dorson, among others.[28] These topics manifest themselves through themes, plots, characterizations, and other conventions, all worthy of detailed exploration in themselves but by far exceeding the limitations of this book.

000 I took certain precautionary measures in collecting the African tales to try to eliminate the possibility of receiving tales that might have origins other than African.[29] I made no requests, however, for particular types or kinds of tales: the stories recorded on each continent were collected at random on any subject that the informants chose.

The African tales in this book came from Uzoaba, an Igbo village near Owerri, Nigeria.[30] The Igbo culture was selected for study and 197 comparison with Gullah because the linguistic features seemingly most prominent on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina (the island on which I have conducted most of my research), are traceable to the Igbo lan-

197 guage. For example, the pronominal system in contemporary Gullah
193 still reveals such features as the singular and plural second-person pronouns
197 *unu* and *hunu*, respectively. These features correspond to the
pronoun *una*, the second-person plural marker in contemporary Igbo. Likewise, one pronoun still expresses the range of third-person pronoun possibilities in Gullah for many speakers. Although Igbo does employ two pronouns—/o/, the vowel sound in *doe*, and /ọ/, the sound of *aw* as in *law*—the two systems are similar in that the same pronoun may be used to refer to both male and female. While it is true that many West African languages do follow this undifferentiating practice, other linguistic features link the lexicon of Gullah and Igbo, including [də], the locative, and the form of the verb *to be*. (This subject is considered in greater detail in Chapter 4.)

•171 In addition to linguistic features, there are similarities between the two cultures in hair-wrapping techniques, food preparation, child-rearing practices, and other social customs already discussed, enough similarities to suggest a concentration of Igbo ancestral background for residents of Wadmalaw and perhaps other islands as well. It is well known among the islanders that each island carries its unique pattern of language and culture, and these patterns may perhaps indicate carryovers from elsewhere in West Africa.

538 As Cronise and Ward have observed, some African tales have parallels in cultures in which there is only the remotest possibility of mu-
171 tual influence. The tale of the "Tar Baby," for example, is found in various versions in most folklore. Certain themes may indeed be universal, just as some linguistic features are universal. The similarities between the Igbo and Sea Island tales cannot be dismissed as coincidental, however, because the genetic link between the African and the African-American people provides the basis for cultural and literary continuity.[31]

The evidence of literary continuity is most apparent in the handling of traditional themes and characters. Both cultures delight in imbuing physically insignificant and seemingly helpless creatures with extraordinary mental acumen. Their superior intelligence and discretion make these small beings not only godlike in powers but models for much stronger creatures to emulate. The "helpless" animal may take the form of the spider of the Gold Coast, the turtle of the Slave Coast, the rabbit of the Sierra Leone region, or the *hlakanyana* of South Africa.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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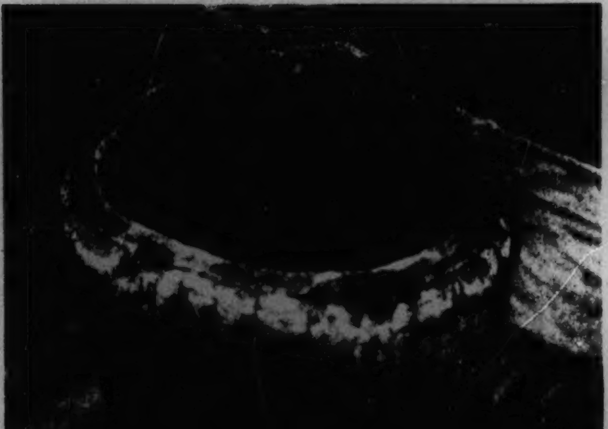

(171) Mortars made from palm trees are traditionally used to pound rice and corn. Similar mortars are still used throughout Africa.

[p·112]

Regardless of the region, these animals are heroic figures in the same tradition as Ber Rabbit in Gullah and inland black literature, or Ananse the spider in Caribbean literature.

In attempting to explain why a weak creature like a rabbit was selected as a folktale hero in black America, traditional theories have posited the powerless being as the personification of the slave, who had to be extraordinarily clever to avoid and survive the wrath of the slave master. While this concept is theoretically sound and indeed operative, it loses validity in light of the evidence that physically insignificant creatures were revered for their intelligence in Africa long before the African-American was ever subjected to the cruelties of slavery. Seldom does one find massive or ferocious animals like the lion, the leopard, the elephant, or the hippopotamus depicted in African literature as shrewd and insightful. They are continuously portrayed as stupid and as perpetually duped and humiliated by smaller animals who must from necessity live by their wits, not by their strength. This concept of shrewdness and cunning embodied within a tiny animal is apparent, for example, in "The Spider, the Elephant and the Hippopotamus," a tale told to Finnegan by the Limba and also told to Cronise and Ward by the Temne speakers.[32] In this tale the spider uses his wit against the power of two larger animals. We can find a parallel in Harris's Sea Island tale "Mr. Terrapin and Mr. Bear." Likewise, an Igbo tale of Nnabe, the tortoise, making a riding horse out of an alligator and insulting him midstream finds a parallel in Parsons's Ber Rabbit making a riding horse out of Ber Alligator on the Sea Islands. This same tale has a parallel in the Caribbean, with Ananse, the spider, riding the tiger's back.[33] In another Igbo tale "Nnabe and the Fruits" (given here with its Sea Island companion tale), Nnabe is able to defraud a whole host of animals; there are similarities in the way Ber Rabbit outwits Ber Wolf in "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter."

The spider, tortoise, and hare are shown to be inferior to and answerable only to a higher immortal being, Chineke in Igbo and the Lord in Sea Island tales. Here, for example, Nnabe and Ber Rabbit seek more knowledge from their creator in "Nnabe and Chineke" and "Ber Rabbit and the Lord." While both animals are revered for their wit and ingenuity, both are kicked out of heaven when they attempt to cheat God. Both continue to bear the scars of God's wrath: Nnabe has a broken shell as a result of his fall, and Ber Rabbit has a white tail as a reminder that God threw a cup of milk at him as he was ejected.

538 In the animal tales from both continents, the central characters nearly always function as though they were human beings. That they
● 171 are lower animals personifying humans is secondary to the intent and purpose of the tales. The animals' roles are seldom comic in the style of American cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, or Bugs Bunny. Tales of Nnabe and Ber Rabbit are designed to represent mature individuals reacting in adult situations of daily life. In tale after tale, the listeners are confronted with multifaceted personalities which they sometimes like, sometimes dislike. There are differences: Nnabe is far more vicious in his interactions, for example, than Ber Rabbit. In many tales he is consciously cruel and tyrannical. Ber Rabbit, on the other hand, is seldom depicted as self-seeking. He is known as a trickster, or one "smart too much," but he generally resorts to chicanery only to preserve his life.

While many favorite African and African-American tales involve animals acting like human beings, many tales are told of mermaids (*mama water* or *daddy water*), great hunters, chiefs, and the common person in struggles against the forces of nature. A frequent theme among the Igbo, Ibebio, and Yoruba involves crimes against the family: a member of one's family kills another member, and the ill deed is revealed by the murdered person's bones. Similar tales are also told on the Sea Islands. Here "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is compared with "The Flower, or the Singing Bones." Tales of this type are customarily accompanied by lyrics, which the audience usually participates in singing. These tales involve the audience fully and are usually welcome diversions from the traditional trickster exploits.

The Gullah and Igbo tales that follow demonstrate the similarities in plot and character that have been mentioned. Most of the African informants had little or no familiarity with the English language. Each tale was told in a familiar setting in the speaker's native tongue and then translated into English with the aid of a bilingual consultant from
538 the village. The Gullah tales have been edited to eliminate stuttering, false starts, and constructions which are not confusing in speech but
128 which, because they are distractions, would most likely make the text more difficult to understand, and ultimately would cause the similarities between the plots to seem more obscure. Features such as the
[193] formulaic or introductory verb *say* and the preverbal markers *de*, *ben*, *bina*, and *don* have been retained to aid in perpetuating the original flavor of the tales. (See Appendix A I for a transcription of one story into

A, [For Appendix I, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 116]

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538 128 an older Gullah spelling and syntax.) As I have emphasized, however, no transcription can fully capture the aura of the nonverbal interplay which is a dynamic aspect of any oral tradition.

538 •171 1. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" and its Igbo parallel, "Nnabe and Chineke [The Tortoise and the Lord]," are classified as Type 2 tales, which are concerned with how the various animals received their physical characteristics. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" is classified as Motif A2231.1, Animal Characteristics: Punishment for Discourteous Answer to God. "Nnabe and Chineke" is Motif A2231.1.4, Discourteous Answer: Tortoise's Shell. These are two of the few tales where Ber Rabbit and Nnabe are actually punished for their mischievous deeds. It is important to note, however, that their punishment is meted out not by mortals like themselves but by a supreme being.

539 Ber Rabbit and the Lord

Mr. Jonas Mickell
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Once upon a time Ber Rabbit went de the Lord for get more knowledge, more wisdom. And the Lord tell Ber Rabbit, "All right! I want you de bring anything white de me. Anything white."

Rabbit went out in the field, and he went out meet [happened to meet] Ber Partridge there. [Ber Rabbit] had a bag, and [he] tell Ber Partridge: "I betcha all you, all couldn't full this bag [I bet you aren't big enough to fill up this bag]."

Partridge say, "How you mean?"

[Ber Rabbit told Ber Partridge], "Run in here, see if you can full this bag."

All the partridge full up [spread his wings], run in, full the bag. Ber Rabbit put that on he shoulder and carry em de the Lord. [The Lord said], "All right!" [But the Lord] gone send em back. Ber Rabbit, he send em back.

"Well, I want you now, Ber Rabbit, de bring me a

538 171 2. "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter" is Animal Type 15, The Theft of Butter by Playing Godfather, and Deception Motif K401.1, Dupe's Food Eaten and Then Blame Fastened on Him. Some previous commentators have made references to a fire-jumping scene in other versions of this Sea Island tale.[34] The African parallel for this tale, "Nnabe and the Fruits" does involve a jumping scene, where Nnabe is expected to jump to his death (Motif K891). However, being the sly, perceptive little animal that he is, Nnabe has made prior arrangements for his getaway once he completes his jump.

539 Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter

James Oree
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Ber Wolf de tell Ber Rabbit, "Let's make some butter, okay?"

So Ber Rabbit and Ber Wolf, they got together. They decided to make some butter. Now, they both was married. And between the rabbit and the wolf, the rabbit thought he had a little more sense than the wolf. Okay?

Um hum! Yeah!

So what happen, the rabbit and the wolf, they decided de make the butter.

By and by Ber Rabbit tell the wolf that his wife was expecting a baby. And that he had de go check on the baby! Every now and then he had de go and check on the baby!

So they work in the field. They went in the field and they start de work. They was hoeing, de working they crop. They planted it together—you know, do everything together. They planted they crop. And rabbit said to the wolf, "Ber Wolf? Look a here, Ber Wolf!" Say, "My wife de call me! Say, I—Shah [a typical Sea Island exclamation]! I have for go check on my wife now. Shah!—My wife de expecting a baby, and—"

[Ber Wolf] say, "Okay! Okay, Ber Rabbit, go head."

When he come back, [Ber Wolf] say, "Did your wife had the baby?"

[Ber Rabbit] say, "Yeah!"

[Ber Wolf] say, "What the baby is?"

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The lion started first and jumped across. Each of the other animals jumped across until at last it was Nnabe the tortoise's time to jump. He sang the song and jumped, but fell into the pit. In the pit he denied that he had eaten the fruit. He said that he fell into the pit because he was overdressed and too heavy to jump. Reluctantly, the other animals agreed that maybe his shell was too heavy and that he should be given another chance to clear himself. So they pulled him out from the pit and let him put off his shell. When he finished, he sang the song again and jumped, but still he fell into the pit. This second time all the other animals were convinced that he was the culprit. For his punishment, he was buried alive in the pit and covered with dirt. However, the tortoise was indeed wise, for he had already had the rabbit dig a path from the pit to his house. So the tortoise went home quietly, laughing to himself and praising himself for outwitting the other animals.

Then the *eke* market day arrived, when the rabbit was to collect his money from the tortoise. So the rabbit went to the tortoise's house and told him that he came to collect his fee. The tortoise did not know what to do, since he did not have the money. So he set another day for the rabbit, explaining that his mother-in-law had died and that he had spent all his money for her funeral. On the newly agreed date, the rabbit went again to collect his fee, and this time the tortoise had conceived of a plan to kill the rabbit. He boiled a big pot filled with water and waited for the rabbit to come. When the rabbit came, the tortoise tried to grab him by his tail, but the rabbit was too fast, and pulled himself loose except for the outer cover of his tail, which was pulled off in Nnabe's hands. To this day that is why the rabbit's tail is whiter than the rest of his body.

Chakpii!! *Haa!*

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3. "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is classified as Type 720, My Mother Slew Me; My Father Ate Me; and Motif E631.1, Speaking Bones of Murdered Person Reveal Murder. This tale was not as commonly told on the Sea Islands as it was among the Igbo of Nigeria. Many, many variations wherein crimes were revealed by the murdered person's bones were collected in Nigeria.

Appendix 1

An Interview: Catching Fish

226 171 The ancient fishing methods explained in this interview are reminiscent of those found in Nigeria and other African countries near large bodies of water. I actually observed the drumming and spearing technique among the Igbo and Ibebio of northern Nigeria. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake also write of this continuing fishing practice on the Sea Islands.[1]

[115] The informant was a retired tradesman and a very important member in the church community. He said that he learned these practices from his father, and his father had learned them from the "old people" before him.

The interview has been edited slightly for clarity.

Mr. Daniel Dent
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
1983

226 124 INFORMANT: To catch mullet fish, we goes in the river. Everything still. The water still. Make a few throw with the cast net, and you haven't catch anything. So you get up on the side of boat and you beat on side with you oars, or paddle. And you just keep beating—[you] call em dolphin, we call em horsemen—then beat until the porpoise come around. After the porpoise come around, then the mullet fish will come to the shallow water. [Then] you cast for catch em. You don't catch much fish without the horseman. The porpoise have to be around. The only way to get the porpoise, man—[you] don't see them—you beat some, on the side of the boat, and they'll hear you miles for miles under the water.

825 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a
538 high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in
the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the
islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than
any of the other animals they come in contact with.

36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the eco-
82 nomic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather
by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which
[805] it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by
counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as
by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the
light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and
shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a
subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the
[554] Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was
informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born
member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

000 37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

113 39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

000 40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

113 41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages
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178 on the speech of the islands, but he does, without qualification, admit the African origin of the traditional burial customs (*Gullah*, p. 97).

•171 52. Robert Hamill Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's
113 Sons, 1904), p. 218.

53. Emory Campbell (personal communication), Penn School Center, Frogmore, S.C.

54. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Oral Tradition of Prayer in Gullah," *Journal of Religious Thought* 39, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1982): 22.

55. See Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941).

56. Jennett Robinson Murphy, *Southern Thought for Northern Thinkers* (New York, 1904), p. 23, quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 144.

Chapter 2

1. See Joel Chandler Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus: Myths and Legends of the Old Plantation* (New York, 1883); Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular* (Boston, Mass., 1888; reprint, Columbia, S.C.: State Co. 1925); Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folklore Society, 1923); and Ambrose Gonzales, *With Aesop along the Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1924).

2. See Charles Joyner, "Slave Folklife on the Waccamaw Neck" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977); or Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 172–195, especially pp. 190–91.

538 3. The *he* is for convenience; Sea Island storytellers can be women but are more usually men (see the next section of this chapter).

113 4. Lee Haring, "A Characteristic African Folktale Pattern," and Phillip Noss, "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," both in *African Folklore*, ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); and Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Audience in Gullah and Igbo: A Comparison of Oral Traditions," *College Language Association Journal* 27, no. 2 (December 1983): 197–209.

5. DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis," p. 369.

6. Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1974), pp. 43–44.

7. Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), pp. 80–81.

8. Alfred Hayes, "Paralinguistics and Kinesics: Pedagogical Perspectives," in *Approaches to Semiotics*, ed. Thomas Sebeok, Alfred S. Hayes, and Mary C. Bateson (London: Mouton Publishers, 1964), pp. 158–59.

9. Richard Dorson, *Negro Tales from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Calvin, Michigan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 52.

000 10. "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," p. 74.

11. Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, p. 68.

12. Interview courtesy of WHMM TV and South Carolina ETV, from the documentary film *When Roots Die*, 1985.

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CHAPTER 2

The Socioreligious Heritage

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> One of the most interesting problems of pre-colonial history is the relation of so-called secret societies to indigenous government. . . . Associations of this kind are prevalent . . . and are particularly numerous in the coastal area of rain-forest . . . including the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone. . . . They are not secret in any other respect. On the contrary, not only is the existence of these societies known . . . , but in many places the wide range of their activities makes them the dominant social force.*

> In the case of a burial site, the coffin and the mound are the obvious containers; the soul of the deceased is the spark. In addition, . . . there are decorative objects that, in both Kongo and the Americas, cryptically honor the spirit in the earth, guide it to the other world, and prevent it from wandering or returning to haunt survivors. . . . The surface "decorations" frequently function as "medicines" of admonishment and love, and they mark a persistent cultural link between Kongo and the black New World.**

Upper Guinea Culture Circles

Just as the impact of the slave trade in the West Atlantic region of the Guinea Coast has been treated with relative disinterest, so also has this area's cultural homogeneity either been glossed over or dismissed as the result of recent intergroup contact and European administration. For purposes of study Upper Guinea is not particularly rich in documentation, nor did the societies there possess high degrees of political central-

[113] *Kenneth Little, "The Political Function of the Poro," Part I, *Africa, Journal of the International African Institute* 35 no. 4 (October, 1965): 349.

[113] **Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 132.

171 ization. Moreover, community groups were usually not as large and territorial holdings not as extensive, as for instance those in the Niger Delta or Western Sudan. Hence the Upper Guinea, containing a multiplicity of ethnic entities, mixed kinship systems, and various languages has not received attention comparable to its significance. Yet early explorers, travelers, and traders were struck by what H. Baumann referred to as distinctive culture circles on the West African coast. Baumann referred to several regions, and his discussion applies to the Upper Guinea Coast, especially present-day Sierra Leone and Liberia. Here peoples historically had common cultural features, the most significant of which regulated the social, political, and to some extent economic life of the communities. These were secret societies with the Poro (or Beri) for men and the Sande (or Bundu) for women being almost universal, and, where they existed, always mandatory. The names sometimes varied but the influence and function of these societies was relatively uniform. The area of the "Poro Cluster" on the Central-West African Coast included the Lokko, Temne, Kono, Mende, Bullom, Krim, and the Limba ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. On the Malaguetta Coast (or Liberia), Poro and Sande groups included but were not limited to the Gola, Vai, De, Kpelle, Gizzi, Gbande, Belle, Loma, Mano, Gio, Ge, Sapa, Bassa, and Kru.[1]

In the sixteenth century, Portuguese traders referred to both male and female societies among Bulloms, observing similarities between various groups of people belonging to these associations. Affinity was so strong that traders viewed the people as one society, under the generic name of Sapi. Principal ethnic groups were Bulloms, Temnes, Limbas, and also some Bagas. They dressed alike, had the same system of justice, and understood each other. Unlike Western Sudanic groups, they had no political centralization, yet possessed social homogeneity through their common secret societies. The Portuguese considered the secret societies ways of training youth who reached puberty. There was a lengthy seclusion, secret training, bestowing of a new name, graduation, and celebration. Observers likened it to a convent procedure. Also, in the late seventeenth century, Dutch geographer Olfe Dapper reported on the multilingual quality of people on the Mesurado Coast under De control, in alliance with the Vai of Cape Mount. Among the languages listed were Temne, Mande, and Gola.[2]

British slave trader Nicholas Owen also witnessed manifestations of Poro society among the Bullom, even though group leadership was influenced by Islam. In 1746 he wrote:

> There is a secret mistery that these people have kept for many ages or, as for what we know, since their first foundation of great consequence to the pace [peace?] of the country; it goes by the general name of Pora or Pora men. These men are marked in their infancy by their priests with three or four rows of small dints upon their backs and shoulders; any that has not these marks they look upon as nothing. The nature of this Pora is this: there is one among the rest who personates the devil or Pora and before they begin to rize him, as they term it, he hides him self in some convenient place within call and upon his priests shouting several times the word 'Wo Pon,' he in the bush answers with a terabal screetch several times. Whenever the woman or white man or any that's not Pora men hears, they immediately fly to the houses and shut the windows and doors. . . . The good of this Pora is to keep from quarrelling. . . .[3]

John Matthews lived in Sierra Leone for several years in the 1700s and also observed the workings of Poro:

> This wise, political institution is desseminated through the country for the purpose of putting an end to disputes and wars, as the jealousy, pride, and irritability of the natives are such as will not suffer them even conscious of being the aggressors to make concessions. . . . This law is never used but in dernier resort and when it is in force, the crimes of witchcraft and murder are punishable by it.[4]

Hence certain functions of Poro-Sande were early discerned by Europeans. These secret societies introduced all members into adulthood. Initiates were isolated from the community for a period of years in a special place called the "sacred grove." In these "bush schools" social knowledge and instruction were imparted. Individuals were educated to their life's work; familiarized with tribal history and lore; and schooled in social conduct and behavior befitting their particular sex and station. For girls, household information, responsibilities as wives and mothers, their economic roles, medicinal knowledge, singing, and dancing formed the basis of their social introduction to womanhood. Boys learned how to build houses, to follow their choice of trade, how to make their own farms, tactics of combat and of hunting. Secrecy of bush activities was paramount on pain of death. Even in the twentieth century the resiliency of these associations, though greatly altered, still remains, and efforts to obtain eyewitness accounts are generally futile. In the old days, initiation was compulsory. Marriage, sexual relations, or holding of property was not possible for a non-initiate. Regardless of biological age, a non-initiate was not considered an adult nor allowed to hold any position of importance.[5]

While Poro and Sande represented transformation from childhood to

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171 citizenship, membership in these societies was clearly more than a puberty *rite de passage* or a course of training for various roles in community life. According to Kenneth Little, a specialist on the Mende Poro, those functions were secondary to the main one, "to impress upon the new member the sacredness of his duty to the Poro," and hence to the community. To this end a youth was subjected to a series of terrifying experiences and symbolically eaten by the Poro spirit—the devil—and reborn by the same spiritual force. What trader Nicholas Owen witnessed was the "devil" entering a village to "catch" boys for Poro. The marks he saw on initiates were not inflicted at birth, but part of the initiation operation, representing the devil's teeth. The devil Poro or Sande first devoured then released the initiate. Its capacity to do this deeply reinforced Poro-Sande power at an impressionable age. Each individual swore to uphold secrecy of the initiation process and to abide by Poro-Sande authority. Allegiance was no longer given primarily to parents and kin but to the secret society, the foremost arbiter. Thus social and political functions of Poro and Sande were implemented to fulfill collective and societal goals. These regulatory processes, in the form of social control, were deterrents to deviant social behavior and arbitrary power. The Poro Council was supreme, and this inner circle called "palavar" to discuss and rule on all important events. They stopped village quarrels, tried and condemned social criminals, intensified holiday spirit on great occasions, and gave permission to declare war. While a chief was the nominal civil ruler, real power was in the hands of the Poro Council, consisting of senior members of both societies who could even depose a chief.[6]

The Poro sign was a spiral of ferns which reportedly still holds sway today in parts of Sierra Leone and Liberia. It represented a powerful prohibition, bringing sickness and death to those who ignored its ban. The spiral of ferns regulated economic affairs, setting rules about fishing, farming, trading practices, and price standards. Thus the secret society functioned as the primary psychological and physical coercive agent for the common good. However, the institution's power was derived from its affinity with the spirits and from other supernatural manifestations. Poro was law. Poro was order. And Poro came from God.[7]

No aspect of West African life was truly secular and Poro-Sande sociopolitical power symbolized relationships between the sacred and the temporal. The foundation of Poro-Sande prerogative was mystical in nature, and the institution was "made by God, not by man." Thus Poro-

Sande spiritual significance was pervasive. Spirits dwelled in the sacred grove. Among them were ancestral spirits, bush and water spirits, spirits of associations, and Poro-Sande spirits, all with particular functions. Ancestral spirits, for example, explained life after death, were concerned with family and the larger group's well-being, and were protectors. Water and bush spirits, the nature category, imparted special knowledge and punishments. They were approached by medicine specialists, fortune tellers, or those specially versed in spirit communication. Association spirits represented such specialized organizations as the leopard or snake society, and were ancillaries of Poro and Sande, deriving power from the spirits they personified. Poro-Sande spirits, of which the "bush devil" was most important, were worldly representations of supernatural forces, personifying the will of "God" and mysteries of life. While other spirits in the pantheon were of the unseen world, Poro-Sande spirits represented the supernatural sphere, as well as earthly manifestations of supernatural power. All spirits remained hidden behind masks. The Poro and Sande leader's identity was an especially guarded secret. The leader's authority was intergroup, and his or her standing was recognized even in distant chiefdoms where a language barrier existed. Bush initiates were taken from several surrounding villages, adding to the strength of communal regulation. Also, a Poro or Sande member's status was recognized from group to group, creating solidarity and a fraternal spirit that superceded immediate kinship ties. A Poro-Sande founder was considered holy and immortal. Their death was kept secret by the society's inner circle of elders while another prepared to fill the place. The leader was buried in the sacred house in the grove. Thus strength and authority of Poro-Sande were not challenged because of a change in leadership.[8]

Hence, one aim was spirit control, mainly through ceremony, ritual, meditation, medicine, and exclusive contact. Essentially, "the Poro may be thought of as an attempt to reduce the pervading spirit world to an organization in which man might contact the spirit world and interpret it to the people, where men became spirits and took on godhead."[9] Additionally, meeting spirits in the bush, living and communicating with them symbolized control over the natural and supernatural environment. The spiritual seclusion also symbolized restraint over one's self by suspending elements of fear and individualism considered harmful to the community. The initiate's capacity to withstand the sacred bush experience and uphold its secrets extended functionally into the secular realm.

•171 Society was organized around allegiance to and belief in the power of Poro and Sande. Reverence for the symbolically sacred led to obedience, accountability, and respect for what was generally its identical secular arm, the Poro Council.

The exact origin of Poro and Sande can probably never be determined. But Golas claim responsibility for the Poro's spread in their region. Vai tradition and that of other neighboring tribes confirm this point of view. Furthermore, Dutch geographer Dapper reported in 1686 that the "great priestess of Women society," residing in Gola country, came to administer to the Vai and De towns. The other theory of origin revolves around Sierra Leone groups. Temne people claim they borrowed the institutions from the Bullom, and the Portuguese observed the practices among the latter. Yet the Mende also claim to be the originators, and have historically had a very strong Poro-Sande. Possibly the institutions were introduced by the Bullom-Gizzi, early neighbors of the Gola, and when the Gizzi people of the south were overrun by and incorporated into the Mende group, they introduced Poro and Sande to the Mende. As neighbors of the Gola, Gizzi people shared the same linguistic background and other cultural traditions. Additionally, the Mende also overran the Gola and sold many into slavery. Hence, discussion comes full circle back to the Gola people. Even today, the most intensive and oldest presence of Poro and Sande is among Gola and Mende groups, as well as Moslem Vai.[10]

Further evidence for secret societies being of Gola origin stems from the interesting belief that the male Poro evolved after the female Sande. In precolonial times Gola society was matrilineal. "We were ruled by women and looked to our mothers," stated a Gola informant. In the beginning was Sande, a woman's society which governed, and was the custodian of ritual and of the spiritual powers necessary to defend ancestral interests. The initiation and training of women was a central task involving the entire community. And into these days of "peace and perfect order" came terrible wars, but women resisted the men's mobilization for defense. Thus the men invented a forest monster—the "Great Spirit of Poro" (a mask form) which frightened the women. This spirit provided men with the power to wrest control of the country, take away the sons, teach them the art of war and of politics, and to enforce loyalty exclusively among males, via the secret bush initiation. In these ways, the Gola defeated their enemies and became a great people. Yet a com-

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promise of sorts was reached. Sande remained a force and the two societies shared sacred and secular governance. But Sande power was diluted and divided, symbolized by their initiation period being shorter than Poro's. By the time of European contact, Golas were a patrilineal people whose greatness had long since waned. In any event, both institutions were adopted by many ethnic groupings with decentralized structures of governance and administration.[11] And the historical importance of Golas in spreading Poro and Sande, coupled with their numerical contributions to slave coffles, provides food for thought regarding their previously ignored significance in coastal Carolina.

Basically then, bush initiation emphasized and reinforced traditional ways of life, a sense of camaraderie and societal bonds extending over a large area, transcending familial, clan, or ethnic barriers. The bush experience was a shared memory instilling loyalty, bonds of attachment, and unity that neither Christianity nor Islam could destroy even today. In Central West Africa allegiance toward the secret society was based on the institution's supernatural power, which was used to establish law, authority, accountability, security, and social cohesion in the community. Nearly all Africans brought to America came from groups where some type of initiation process was practiced, which further reinforces the argument for tenacity. Yet none contained the distinctive structurally inclusive elements of Poro and Sande with its compulsory ritual, social, political, economic, educational, and hierarchical framework. Poro and Sande influence, like most of traditional West African existence, suffered and was abused greatly because of the traffic in slaves. The power of Poro, rather than remaining a cementing force became, in many cases, an instrument of abuse.[12] Nevertheless, it was for many previous generations the foundation of social and spiritual organization among Upper Guinea ethnic groups. Once slave trading ceased, secret societies resumed much of their past significance. Poro and Sande existed before Europeans came and remained after the colonization of Sierra Leone and Liberia. In Africa these institutions withstood over three centuries of barbarous slave trading on the coasts. They survived the disdainful circumspection of black and white colonizers and repelled the narrow-minded indoctrination of black and white missionaries. Because so many ethnic groups from Poro-Sande traditions were transported to the Lowcountry and perhaps elsewhere, conceivably *some* of the more adaptive and useful elements of these institutions might remain, despite the trauma of capture, the long march, and the Middle Passage.

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ture, the long march, and the Middle Passage. Later discussion on Gullah folk religion will offer interpretations of how functional and ritualistic features of Poro-Sande Societies specifically, and other initiation rites generally, may have merged with Gullah versions of Christianity. This was especially apparent in that Gullah folk religion served as a cultural and community building force and a means of instilling individual self-worth among bondspeople.

Religion and Order in Traditional Society

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Both Islamic and traditional African religions, similar to Christian spiritual belief, adhered to a kind of monotheism. For non-Moslem Africans the Supreme Being or Sky God had many names. Akan-Ashanti referred to God as *Onyame*. Bantu peoples called God *Nzambi*. Among the Mende God was *Ngewo* and to the Gola *Daya*. The Supreme Deity was generally considered omniscient, omnipotent, and creator of all life. God represented the highest values—kindness, justice, sincerity, and mercy. Thus in African perceptions, God was no fomenter of mischief or ill will. Unlike Jehovah, God was not to be feared, and no prayers needed to be offered. Evil came from other sources, not the Creator. Although God was not accorded worship through libation and was invisible, allegiance was rendered, and the Deity's ultimate power over humans was recognized. "Nzambi possesses us and eats us," or "he is gone, Nzambi has willed it," were central themes in some BaKongo proverbs and songs.[11]

Belief in afterlife was integral to traditional African religion. But Africans did not view the future world with fear, nor, as in Christianity, as a place of dispensations for rewards and punishments in a strict sense. In this land of the dead where life continued, there was no sickness, disease, poverty, or hunger. But underworld inhabitants retained the positions of their earthly hierarchy. Death was a journey into the spirit world, not a break with life or earthly beings. The idea of the perpetuity of life through time, space, and circumstance was common to African religious culture, and the complexity of this belief system is typified by BaKongo cosmology and concepts of the four moments of the sun. Using the sun through its course around the earth, the BaKongo pointed out the four stages which make up one's life cycle: (1) rising—meaning birth, beginning, or regrowth, (2) ascendency—meaning maturity and responsibility, (3) setting—implying death and transformation, (4) midnight,

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indicating existence in the other world and eventual rebirth. Life was a continuum and the sign of the four moments of the sun symbolized "spiritual continuity and renaissance" via its spiral journey. The crossing of the four solar moments, spacially like a Greek cross and similar to the Christian cross, was not introduced to the BaKongo by early Christianity. Long before the arrival of Europeans, this geometric statement, the Kongo Cruciform, adorned funerary objects and in other ways reflected BaKongo aesthetic perceptions of their relationship to the world. Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet have brilliantly demonstrated this through BaKongo visual traditions in Africa and the New World.[14] 171

Belief that one's spirit consciously existed after death was also common. "New" Africans, once they learned English, found reinforcement in Christian principles taught by white ministers, that everyone possessed a soul, apart from one's human form, with its own destiny. In certain ways African concepts were more complicated. Mende believed that each mortal had a *personality-soul*, or spirit existence, where the "vital force of the individual resided." This *personality-soul* left the flesh at death and took on full spiritual form. One who was a good person in earthly life continued as a good *personality-soul*. Those who led an evil life likewise became demonic as well as immune to antiwitch medicines. Golas and other neighboring groups referred to the soul as the "heart" which also stood for the mind. One's actions were directed by the "voice of his heart" which persuaded and guided individual behavior. Each living being possessed two hearts—one good and one bad—each trying to influence the other. Death destroyed the body but did not affect the soul, or "heart." The dead would awake, arise, and join their departed relations and friends at a common place of abode. A further example of immortality is provided by Akan tradition. Akan peoples believed that each person's guiding spirit, the *okra*, departed at death, indicating completion of earthly destiny. The *okra* returned to God to justify its existence on earth, but was also capable of appearing again in spirit form among the world of the living. The *okra* was considered the real self—in a sense, one's conscience—and was thus responsible for human behavior whether good or evil.[15]

Bantu peoples probably had the most elaborate and complex system of afterlife beliefs which were central to their religious traditions. Humans were double beings, consisting of an outer and inner entity. Each entity in turn had two parts. One part of the outer being, the shell, was 17

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17 nance.[18] The absence of mandatory secret societies as a means of maintaining corporate linkage and community loyalty points up the significance of kinship and lineage in a monarchial system such as that practiced by peoples of the Kongo region. Clan loyalty was paramount. If *Nzambi* ruled, reproved, and in the final analysis ordered the world according to divine design, ancestors superintended, rewarded, and welcomed the dead into their subterranean village. Ritually, BaKongo spiritual behavior was concatenated to ancestor devotion, not to *Nzambi*, though the spirit world consisted of forces unleashed by *Nzambi*. Among the most powerful of these were deceased elders of the clan, called *bakulu*—white spirits who roamed the earth (in woods, streams, and villages) and resided in the subterranean "world of no evil." Vital to ancestor reverence was the belief that discarnate human spirits maintain interest in their people after passing to the unseen society where they guard traditions and activities of the living. If family herds were squandered, ancestors took note and punished. If drought threatened the family herds, old chiefs in the spirit world might take pity and send rain. The power of ancestral spirits was commonly recognized.[19]

171 Belief in ancestoral spirits, in life after death, and in the significance of that future life gave funeral and burial rites a central place in African existence. Sick-bed attendance and a fitting send-off were essential observations of this rite of passage. Death halted routine activities when marriage or other rites did not. Failure to properly observe the death ritual could either implicate one in that death, or bring ill will to the erring clan member. The curse of the dying was much dreaded. In the American South, as noted by Herskovits, Bastide, Thompson, and others, black cemeteries represent a special historical relic. For here one finds the clearest, strongest visible examples of memories of African-inspired customs. African reverence for departed members of the family 771 and group remained a factor in Gullah religious life even after they accepted 775 Christianity. Gullah regard for deceased family members could not have equalled the homage paid to these spirits by Old World or "New" Africans. Still, spirits of the dead had to be reckoned with, and slaves believed they took the form of either good or evil supernatural forces. Vengeful spirits of the dead were those wronged during their lifetime, or "on easy" spirits perhaps indicating bewitchment, or they were the ancestors of outside families or groups. Hence in keeping with

77 their traditional African heritage, Gullahs employed various means of
775 pacification of the living dead, seemingly more derived from Bantu influence.[20]

Supernatural causation of suffering, disease, accidents, death under
17 obscure circumstances, and other misfortunes was a core of African thought. Magic and medicine were employed for protection and healing. The use of sacred medicines called *minkisi* (singl. *nkisi*) was, along with ancestor reverence, fundamental to religion among Bantu peoples who lacked a complex system of lesser deities possessed for instance by the Yoruba peoples. Although *Nzambi* allowed death to come to humankind, the Deity also armed the people with *minkisi*. Minkisi power derived from two classes of medicine. They contained "spirit-embodying" (earth from a grave site for instance) and "spirit-admonishing" objects (seeds, claws, miniature knives, stones). Hence the basis of *nkisi* life source was a "captured soul," "spirit controlled by a man," and the charm's owner directed the spirit of the object to accomplish certain things.[21]

Medicine specialists, priests, and priestesses were, like ancestors, significant spiritual intermediaries. They were the great healers, or practitioners of "white magic" often symbolized by adornment with white chalk. Medicine specialists, called *nganga* by the BaKongo, discerned the cause of illness, holocaust, or unhappiness, discovered the culprit, and prescribed treatment and a means of preventing recurrence of the calamity. Since afflictions and misfortune were the workings of "black magic," called *kindoki* in KiKongo, diviners employed miraculous as well as herbal healing elements in their profession. As combatants of evil and antisocial behavior, they interceded spiritually with the supernatural and in some societies instructed patients regarding which ancestors or minor deities to approach for defensive and preventive measures. John Mbiti, an East African theologian and scholar, has offered a general synthesis of the African specialists' practice:

> The medicine man is in effect both doctor and pastor to the sick person. His medicines are made from plants, herbs, powders, bones, seeds, roots, juices, leaves, liquids, minerals, charcoal and the like; and in dealing with a patient, he may apply massages, needles or thorns, and he may bleed the patient; he may jump over the patient, he may use incantations and ventriloquism, and he may ask the patient to perform various things like sacrificing a chick or goat, observing some taboos or avoiding certain foods and persons—all these are in addition to giving the patient physical medicines.[22]

Thus, diviners combined physical, religious, and psychological approaches in their treatments. 171 Perhaps in instances where a physical cure was warranted herbal medicines sufficed. But when a patient was convinced that superhuman agencies were at the root of the problem, a diviner resorted to similar countermeasures of supernatural proportions, and it was a case of spirit acting upon spirit. Patients with faith enough in their specialists, priests, or priestesses might be relieved of a spell they felt in the grip of, "cured" of a psychosomatic complaint, or the healer might even employ an effective herbal remedy while prescribing an amulet, in which case the two powers working together were credited with effecting a cure.[23]

African diviners were specialists who usually considered themselves "called" to their positions, either as youths or later in life. The profession was also passed on within the family. The nature of the "calling" was generally through dreams in which deities or ancestors summoned a would-be diviner to the work. The training process was extensive and candidates were schooled in medicinal knowledge, magic, and witchcraft countermeasures. In the Upper and Lower Guinea regions, mandatory secret societies assumed the task of training religious specialists and the process took place over a number of years in which candidates were isolated from everyone except other initiates and teachers. Among ethnic groups of the Kongo, medicine specialists were sometimes trained in special secret societies. The class of diviners was elaborate (with over fifty orders), since BaKongo religion was solidly based on magico-healing *(minkisi)*. Yet a "proper specialist" or *nganga* need not necessarily belong to any society.[24]

Functions of spiritual leaders and diviners were of paramount significance in the New World setting. 171 791 In the colonial era these leaders most likely provided a direct link with and representation of the past. Later they demonstrated the African-American adaptive capacity as they incorporated their influence into the Christian religion as well as sometimes operating completely outside of it. In the early days, when memories and reminiscences of Africa were fresh, African diviners assumed religious leadership. From this group may have emerged the "spiritual parents"—men and women whose position was unauthorized by whites, but central to the slaves' spiritual and religious orientation. Their existence predated the coming of organized Christian instruction to the Sea Islands. Yet they became the Gullahs' plenipotentiaries, responsible for

171 guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin'" experience
791 just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the
"bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery of Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of
754 nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in
conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical
759 actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of
good.

As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last
567 generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as hav-
771 ing a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting
175 house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake
178 of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new
771 religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and
178 coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-build-
ing, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another
771 basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of
829 reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural
phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

ships as well. The ontological[27] category of traditional African societies, 178
and which also formed the basis of the Gullah world view, was the fu- 779
sion of spirituality with human activity and the impact of a sacred pres- 829
ence in all areas of life. Spirituality was a main element of culture, integrating and coordinating other aspects of communal behavior. Such a pattern, so deterministic to group attitudes in West African society, was difficult to obliterate especially among a people so completely defined out of the new social and cultural structure into which they were thrust.

West African world view was consonant with the idea that in a cohe- 171
sive and integrated community each member had a place. In colonial Kongo whites tended to assume that individualism was absent from black behavior, and attributed to Africans a "Bantu mentality," completely different from "European mentality." As one author noted, this was a rationalization for despotism over Africans. Wyatt MacGaffey maintains that a "purely dogmatic" assumption of some scholars led to insistence that the individual is not differentiated from the collective or clan. One solution, writes MacGaffey, is to distinguish between "true individualism," a commendable trait among the BaKongo, and "egocentrism" which was deplorable. Additionally, MacGaffey sees a difference between progressive "civilized collectivism" and primitive forms of collectivity, the latter stagnating a society. These insights explain much about traditional African society. Certainly Africans had civil, structured communities in which individual activity was forged with collective necessity. Traditional African spiritualism was an individual as well as collective experience. It encompassed the total well-being of the community, but each
person had a role in society, guided by spiritual forces. In this sense, [771]
religion for Africans and Gullahs, whether essentially traditional or Christian, was a total immersion phenomenon. The sacred was not set apart from temporal, individual, communal, material, or even political concerns, and religion assumed a meaning outside of a "holy" building, a "sacred" day of the week, or a set of dogmas and creeds to be accepted at face value. In traditional African philosophy, spiritual elan affected one's whole system of being, embracing feelings, social interactions, values, fears, and the disposition of the community at large. John Mbiti succinctly expresses this consciousness:

> . . . in traditional society there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, to do so is to be severed from his

171 roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his existence. To be without one of these corporate elements of life is to be out of the whole picture. Therefore, to be without religion amounts to a self-excommunication from the entire life of society.[28]

Viewed in this light, the power of Poro-Sande, of the ancestors, and of *minkisi* were key unifying socioreligious forces. Each was effective because of divine supernatural intervention which demanded individual and group propriety. God gave Upper Guinea peoples Poro-Sande, gave *minkisi* to the BaKongo, and transformed the ancestors into spiritual guardians. Hence God was not only a Supreme Spirit but a lawgiver as well. The supernatural existence of Poro-Sande was thus ordained and the pantheon of Poro-Sande spirits, through association with God, decreed laws, set standards, modes of behavior, worship, and customs. The "captured spirit" in each *nkisi* was incarnated power sent directly from *Nzambi* (similar perhaps to the Christian Holy Ghost). Ancestors were the emissaries of the withdrawn Supreme Deity. This idea of the remoteness of God, noted by writers and observers, is disputed by some recent African scholars. Still both sides of the debate acknowledge the presence of a Supreme Deity in African spiritual concepts, and that God had agents through which divine will was dispensed. This provided a linkage of spiritual virtue with communal responsibility. The attributes of God (discussed earlier), corresponded with characteristics of harmony and social order, the antithesis of bush living which was a wild, antisocial state
777 of consciousness. Similarly, Gullahs who accepted Christianity associated community socialization with religious piety. The laws of God were
57 synonomous with correct conduct toward other members of the slave
567 quarters. In maintaining this African socioreligious connection in the American ambiance, bondspeople operated on an internal logic that excluded planters, overseers, and even white Christian ministers. There was a parallel between the structural configuration of what became Gullah folk religion and composition of social order in the quarters. Thus in Gullah antebellum communities their interpretations of spirituality played a major role in attitudes toward collective accountability.[29]

171 African codes of ethics stemmed from spiritual orientation. Moral defects were considered spiritual flaws in traditional society and a blight on one's character. Individuals were expected to be guided by ethics characteristic of God, the ultimate source of moral order. Patriarchs, diviners, ancestors, and other spirits that one met in the sacred grove

and through communion, were daily guardians of human behavior. Punishments and restitution for breaches in morals and ethics were not the province of a future world judge but dealt on earth.[30] Thus, although West African peoples were not generally adherents to the concept of a future tribunal, they did believe that evil activities and failure to obey social regulations warranted earthly censure and punishment according to the degree of depravity involved. And they developed institutions to carry out regulatory functions. This was obviously a more effective method of controlling deviant social behavior. In communities so heavily based on interdependency, assurances of immediate repercussions and ostracization were a more direct and real threat than fear of a remote world beyond.

Inherent in the traditional African world view that places sacredness foremost as a sociocultural component was an anthropocentric philosophy. Although employing a different purpose from what is being suggested here, John Mbiti, one of the adherents of this approach, divides the categories of African ontology thusly:

1. *God* as the ultimate explanation of the genesis and sustenance of both man and all things
2. *Spirits* being made up of superhuman beings and the spirits of men who died a long time ago
3. *Man* including human beings who are alive and those about to be born
4. *Animals and plants* or the remainder of biological life
5. *Phenomena and objects without biological life.*[31]

Reverend Mbiti would perhaps disagree, but sociologically speaking African ontology appears to place more emphasis on humankind than on God and the spirits. While God is the apex of the African theory of being, humankind is the center since everything is viewed in relation to human existence.[32] This expresses affirmation of human and earthly life. Ontological categories are significant mainly within the context of human essence, experience, and environments, from the highest to the lowest form of being. Human spiritual activity is directed toward justification, preservation, protection, and enrichment of life. God explains creation of life and is a model of virtue that all should strive toward. Spirits are intermediaries representing assurance of perpetuity beyond the grave. The thrust of spiritual behavior confirms that mortal life is the nucleus of being, though not the end of the cycle. Recognition of ancestors, the power of Poro-Sande, sacred medicine, and the Supreme God, represent

171 endeavors to contribute to the natural and supernatural processes believed to govern life. The relationship between the pivotal position of humanity and religion in African ontology is seen in general concepts regarding life in an African village on the individual as well as the communal level.

While communal concerns are paramount, individual experience also represents group totality. Hence a sense of the sacred accompanied one from conception, through physical death and beyond. Life activity was fashioned by beliefs and rites with strong religious connotations. For example, African women participated in numerous rites and ceremonies to insure bringing a healthy child into the world. The fate of the unborn was placed in the care of spiritual beings and forces. A newborn's survival past three to seven days was a sign that it had been blessed by the spirits and a sacred naming ceremony was held where the infant was set apart for a certain occupation and a life of good habits and industry. At childhood's end, the spirits were celebrated and appreciation shown ceremoniously for watch and care during those formative years. Upon entrance into puberty a religious rite customarily prepared the youth for the initiation process. After initial training in the bush, the neophyte reentered society through a lavish sacred confirmation, recognizing that the individual was no longer a lost soul but a member of the village. Marriage rites also had consecrational connotations, a commemoration of continued procreation of the human species, longevity of the community, and individual self-fulfillment. Hence, introduction into various stages of life was accompanied by sacred observations, ceremonies, and festivals. Additionally, during the periods of crisis and stress of normal adult life, one naturally looked to an depended upon supernatural succor (via sacred medicine ancestral intervention) for guidance and assistance. Of course, death was epitomized by a religious send-off to the spirit world, with which the living had maintained such close contact. Death, then, was but the climax of one existence and the beginning of another. And afterlife concepts were perhaps the fullest embodiment of spiritualism as well as convictions of human perpetuity.[33]

Thus African religion can be viewed as primarily a celebration of collective human life through individual experience. To live fully and robustly was a basis in African thinking and a reasoning behind their particular cosmology. That which threatened this will to live, or "vital force" was considered dangerous to the individual and to society. Inhabitants

of the spirit world were guardians of life. They were appealed to when 171
illness, environmental disaster, or the malice of wrongdoers jeopardized the life force. Often they were placated in the interim as a precautionary measure, always with the end being the perserverance of the individual, the clan and village, and the group. The underlying and perhaps most dynamic force operative in the development of a religion among the Gullahs was rooted in these processes. In some respects, African traditional religion was complimented by certain Christian beliefs. But it was mainly a pristine element of sacred thought that remained with the slaves and accounted for the vitality of African-American culture and creation of an African-American ethos. It was a spirituality which represented a zealous affirmation and celebration of life, that did not separate sacred from secular responsibility, and that placed community above individual interests without completely sacrificing personhood. The effects of this 171
broader guiding African influence on Gullah religion explain their striv- 771
ing and motivation in maintaining, within the realm of bondage, a reason for being. Spiritual causation was one of the few means available in their attempts to fulfill needs, interpret experience, and articulate the expectations of an emerging people. This, along with practical and applied examples of Christianity, formed the basis of Gullah folk religion. Yet the process of socioreligious community formation was slow, traumatic, and filled with pitfalls. In the early years there were problems of cultural alienation on both sides. Even later, whites were not generally anxious to include the masses of African-Americans into the Protestant spiritual ethos. Nor were Gullahs exactly bursting with enthusiasm for a religion whose doctrines supposedly ordained their foreign bondage. This polarization lessened, for whites realized benefits in adopting an *unequal* spiritual coexistence, and Gullahs decided the new religion could be interpreted on a number of levels.

[p. 64 is blank]

175 567 787 [775] More important than feelings of guilt and sinfulness, so fundamental to Christian conversion, was the seeker's desire to become a part of the community. The more intense the "trabbel" or "vision," the more dramatic the integration into society.

The mystical nature of the slaves' conversion experience involved a travel during which seekers often prayed and spoke to religious nature objects rather than to God.[23] As the Methodist informant noted, this was not linked to a Christian tradition. Literature on the previously discussed [171] secret cultural associations of the Windward Coast peoples is limited, since even today ethnic groups generally refuse to discuss them. Nevertheless, there is enough existing material on this tradition to suggest secret society link with Gullah concepts of conversion, personhood, and group membership as practiced within and reinforced by Christianity.

000 Initiation into the Poro and Sande contained two central components—contact with spirits and extended instruction, both aimed at socialization of the individual and preparation for an active communal role. Among the Kuranko, Mano, Limba, Mende, Temne, Gola, and other ethnic groups, withdrawal from organized society into the bush was clearly related to a type of release through transcendence, commonly expressed as a lonely, spiritual journey or travel on which the initiate becomes acquainted with death. The Poro and Sande were the universal male and female cultural societies of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and parts of Gambia. Boys and girls usually entered the bush school at puberty, but at separate periods and for different lengths of time. Sande initiates, like Gullah females, wore a white head tie, called "the white thing," and covered their faces with white clay while Gullah female seekers used ash. The *Mazowo* (high priestess) always wore white and was envisioned thusly by initiates. Withdrawal from village society was a ritualistic death. Initiates were taken into a sacred designated area of the bush by Poro-Sande priests and priestesses, called altar mothers and fathers. Here they symbolically took leave of earth and journeyed down into the spirit world, the world of the dead. Among some groups, the Mano, for example, these spirits were ancestors. For others, the Kuranko and Limba, they were spirits the initiates encountered, spirits who were nameless, capricious, quais-human nature beings sometimes occupying streams, rivers, and mountains. In any case, contact with these spirits represented a form of demise and in their realm initiates dwelled during the entire period of segregation. The boys and girls conversed with the spirits and related these

code of the society could be imposed upon leaders by society members. 000
The zo were the principal characters in the society, and were charged with protecting the traditions and institutions of the group. The zo people had a "majestic status." They were respected by chiefs and elders, and "honored with intense devotion by the youth of the land." In personal characteristics a zo was "chivalrous, courteous, public spirited, law-abiding and fearless." The zo was also a teacher of "native lore, arts, and crafts." He or she had full knowledge of the history and traditions of the people. Above all, the zo were "authentic" judges of all matters pertaining to the people's welfare.[26]

As role models these African leaders correspond to some extent with 175
Gullah elders. But there is an even closer relation between zo and Gullah 171 •
spiritual parents to whom the slaves looked for guidance and who main- 567
tained such "absolute authority" over them. Laura Towne wrote: 792

> I went to-day to see Maum Katie, an old African woman who remembers 554
> worshipping her own gods in Africa but who has been nearly a century in this
> country. She is bright and talkative, a great "spiritual mother," a fortune teller, (791)
> or rather prophetess, and a woman of tremendous influence over her spiritual
> children.

Similarly, Harriet Ware was acquainted with "Old Peggy, the 'leader' 175
from Fripp Point." Ware was told that "Old Peggy and Binah" were the 567
two "whom all that came into the Church, had come through, and the 554
Church supports (takes care of) them." Thus the Methodist missionary 791
correctly assessed the role and power of women diviners in Gullah church 791
membership. A further example of female influence in the sacred-secular 792
world of slaves is provided by Francis Kemble. An old woman on the Butler plantations named Sinda, reigned as a prophetess among the slaves for many years and acquired as ascendency over them. When she declared the world would soon end, "her assertion took such possession of the people on the estate that they refused to work, and the rice and cotton fields were threatened with an indefinite fallow in consequence of this strike on the part of the cultivators." The overseer, realizing the impossibility of attempting force, waited until the appointed day arrived. Sinda' prediction proved false and no emancipation was forthcoming. The people went back to work and Sinda, in a fallen state, was "tremendously flogged."[27]

It is difficult to discern where one type of socioreligious leadership 175
567
554

> 175 793 795 band of singers and they sent up hymn after hymn during the exercises. Mr. Phillips and Siah went into the water. The Pastor extended his hands and his whole flock of candidates went forward into the water. Each one seemed to be attended by several friends or relatives, who besides being bodily support carried dry clothing, shawls, cloaks and overcoats. . . . They all gathered about the minister and Siah. Mr. Phillips took them in turn—each by one shoulder while Siah laid hold of the other and together they immersed them, over one hundred and forty. As fast as they had been baptized they stepped to the shore, though before they reached there, their friends received them and shuffled them up . . . and hurried them off into the bushes. It took a long time to get through with so many, but after a while it was over and we all went back to church. All the candidates came out in shiny robes. . . . There was a great difference in their looks when they came into the church the second time. Then we had a long service after which the right hand of fellowship was given and . . . the sacrament was administered to them.[32]

175 794 795 (171) Resemblance is noted between the African secret society candidates' "turning out" and the Gullahs' "baptizin'." Both situations represented the emergence of a new individual whose status as a full member of the community was illustrated by a water burial. This new position was not only expressed by immersion but by the wearing of new garments and partaking of a communion service with family, friends, and, in the case of Gullahs, only "true believers" of the Baptist faith. In both instances the event was as impressive as it was significant. Like the new Christians, African initiates returning from the bush were considered "newborns from the belly of the Devil." All claims against them were forgiven and they were not responsible for any contract or behavior displayed prior to being devoured by the devil and reemerging as new beings.[33]

No ceremony symbolized an individual's initiation into the church and community more than baptism. For Gullahs, this had to be total immersion. Even those salves who joined the Methodist church usually insisted on total immersion rather than "mere sprinkling." Perhaps this preference was a latent memory of secret society initiation, with total immersion representing absolute commitment to the Gullahs' socioreligious culture. It is also possible that, as some Methodist missionaries believed, Gullahs were confident that "baptism by total immersion is a means of a present, full and eternal salvation; and that after you have been baptized, it is impossible to sin or fall from grace."[34] Yet the most significant feature of the Gullahs' attachment to total immersion may have been that this black community interpreted performance of the rite as symbolically

institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and 175
vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there 794
was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave 567
quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they 779
needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage. And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event, the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed. By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement, restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa.
Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular com- [771)
munal needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was [171) ●
on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs, beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order, while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were 175
then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This 567
new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring 794
shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the indi- 796
vidual considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell, who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in 1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton
Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionar- [797)
ies. Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking, prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

CHAPTER 10

Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural

000 "En when I trabbles de deep woods, whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl en de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.
Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulpher. Dey es say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. . . . So I totes meh powder en sulpher en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd."*

761 Gullah's attached a tremendous significance to death, but there was little
evidence of apprehension at the prospect of dying. Slaves lived in the
presence of death so constantly that they seemed to consider the phe-
nomenon as much a part of living as was their continuous labor. That
they often reflected on the subject is evident in their spirituals. Yet these
[533] songs do not indicate that Gullahs thought of death with fear, forebod-
[157] ing, or morbidity. Perhaps it was partly this stoicism in the face of earthly
demise that some observers viewed as resignation or the effects of de-
moralization. All African ethnic groups believed in life beyond physical
761 death. Possibly Gullahs retained the West African bush-initiation expe-
775 rience in their attitude toward death. This idea of a symbolic journey to
[171] the world of the dead and a triumphant return might explain the Gul-
lahs' ability to transcend feelings of dread about death and to disavow its
000 ultimate power over them. But perhaps an equally strong influence was
the BaKongo, since these societies had the most elaborate afterlife be-
liefs. The BaKongo four moments of the sun, as previously discussed,

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*"Truss Gawd." South Carolina Folklore Project #1655, D-4-33, WPA, SCL.

no sorcery involved, by praying out loud, reporting a heavenly vision or 763 giving some evidence that peace had been made with God on the deathbed. A pious life counted for little if this was not observed. Nor did an evil life mean damnation, if the dying could satisfy spectators with an appropriate heavenly vision. What was probably more important to Gullahs was that the deceased be at peace with the world, hence assuring the community that he or she was not a witch, or bewitched, and would not return to "haant" the living.[10]

Those spirits destined for hell did not actually go there until judgment 775 day, according to Gullahs. Instead, these "on-easy speerits" roamed the earth, having no resting place, and tormented the living. Some Gullahs believed that good spirits went straight to heaven, but most seemed to think that even these spirits remained on earth, close to the place of their burial. Unlike those who "died bad," good spirits would normally not harm the living, nor would they roam. They appeared only in dreams, [787) giving messages and warnings to the living. Thus Gullahs had a real concern for coaxing an individual to "die good," and a real superstition [763) about those who "died bad." The slaves devised various mechanisms of defense against the latter spirits.[11]

Much of the Gullahs' attitude toward death and belief in spirits was 761 inherited from the African respect for and honor of the living dead, and 775 from the African belief in the power of sorcery. Consider, for instance, 171 a description of death among the Mende: 000

> When a dying man is panting for breath, the Mende say "Taa ha ha yiyei le ma" ("he is climbing the hill of death"). As soon as death is announced, the members of the family all begin to wail. The body of the deceased is then washed, and messages are sent to call the absent members of the family. . . . Members of the family will bring money, cloth, wine and rice as their contribution towards the funeral expenses. . . . On the fourth day for a man (the third day for a woman), the "crossing-the-river" ceremony takes place. . . . If these ceremonies are not properly performed, the evil will fall on those responsible.

Similarly, for Temne people, the underlying idea of funeral rites is to appease the spirit of the dead so they will not trouble the living. Mende also believe that separation of good and bad people takes place after their crossing the river. While there is no clear-cut idea as to who bad people are, they are chiefly thought of as those who dealt in "bad medicine or witchcraft." These evil ones in their spirit form will vent their feelings by sending disease and will manifest themselves by haunting the living

> "Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound 567
> My ears, attend the cry; 764
> Ye living men, come view the ground (533)
> Where you must shortly lie."

> . . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the Ba- 764
Kongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off 171
bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[13]

Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief 771
in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, 177
and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne (754)
noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good (755)
eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon 771
passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe 789
over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

ories of Telfair Hodgson, a number of her father's slaves came directly from Africa. The slaves' graves were "always decorated with the last articles used by the departed, and broken pitchers, and broken bits of colored glass were considered even more appropriate than the white shells from the beach nearby." Sometimes the slaves also carved "wooden figures like images of idols," or put a "patchwork quilt" on the grave. One twentieth-century investigator, Samuel Lawton, was told by a number of Sea Island ministers that it was also a common custom to bury articles along with the dead: 764 567

> You must not think that just because you do not find anything on those graves that the relatives did not put some things in there. It is most likely that they have a number of things buried with the body. I have often, at the burials I have conducted, seen the relatives pour hamper baskets full of things right down on top of the coffin before the dirt is shoveled into the grave.[17]

The custom of putting objects both in and on top of graves can be traced to African origins. The Ovimbundu place articles such as baskets, gourds, and instruments used in the burial on top of grave sites. Peoples in the Kongo were said to "mark the final resting-places of their friends by ornamenting their graves with crockery, empty bottles, old cooking-pots, etc." Many ethnic groups of the Windward Coast believed that it was necessary to provide the dead with various gifts, domestic articles, and clothing that could be of use in the life beyond the grave. Such articles, along with food and water, would be left at the grave, so that the spirit of the deceased would come and claim them.[18] 764 171 •

Although the Gullahs believed in two spirits, it was the "trabblin'" spirit rather than the heaven-going spirit which caused the greatest concern. The reasons given for grave adornment clearly indicate the African precedent. One informant related: 774 775 (171)

> Yo' see, suh, everybody got two kinds ob speerits. One is der hebben-goin' speerit. . . . Den dere is de trabblin' speerit. . . . De hebben-goin' speerit don't gib you no trouble, but de trabblin' speerit, 'e be de one dat gib you worriment. E come back to de t'ings 'e like. E try fur come right back in de same house.[19]

Some Africans regarded their essential being as divided into "little me in the big me." Apparently "little me" existed before life and would continue to exist after death in the spirit world. This relates to the Gullah informant's idea of two kinds of spirits. The heaven-going spirit, "little me," depending on how one died, would, after death, rest in the

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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774 spirit world while the traveling spirit would torment the living. Hence, Gullahs asserted that the last used articles were buried with the deceased 775 to "keep de speerit outen de house." This would go along with the Gullah practice of thoroughly cleaning the deceased's house to break earthly ties. Another explanation which the Gullahs offered was "to satisfy de (782) speerit at de grave." It was said that the spirit desired to be near objects [764] that it loved before death. "Yessuh," stated one informant, "dey puts t'ings on de grave so dey be handy fur de speerit and he be satisfy."[20]

775 Like Africans, Gullahs had a definite revulsion against the return of the deceased in the form of "trabblin' speerits" regardless of the kind of life the individual had lived. These spirits were considered evil, similar to *kindoki* among the BaKongo. Every effort was made to pacify these 775 "speerits." This is further illustrated by the presence of whiskey bottles 764 on the graves in churchyards. A Gullah minister provided the following 782 explanation:

> When a man is living it take liquid whiskey in he stomach to make him drunk, but when a man is dead he don't hab a stomach to hol' de liquor, but it don't take nuttin' but de fumes from whiskey to make a speerit drunk. Dose dat bin used to gittin' drunk fo' dey dies, dey will keep on gittin' drunk after dey dies, so dey t'ink dat de speerit ob a drunkard will hover right in front ob de mout' ob a livin' person when he bin drinkin' so he can whiff de fumes ob de whiskey on he bre't an' dat will make de speerit drunk. But ain't no livin' man want no speerit hover right dere in front ob he mount', so dat is why dey puts whiskey bottles on de drunkard's grave. De whiskey bottles on de graves is empty 'cause de smell is enough to satisfy de speerit an' make 'en drunk.[21]

764 Gold Coast Africans believed that the spirits made use of all offerings left by friends and relatives after death. Mende carried to the graveside • 171 cooked chicken together with rice and red palm oil. This mixture was placed on a banana leaf and laid by the side of the grave. Sometimes soil was dug out and the red rice placed in a hole. Then a little water was placed on the grave and words were spoken: "Here is water, wash your hands, eat your rice, drink your water." The family then ate the remainder of the chicken and rice and offered a prayer, indicating that the family had done right by the deceased and expected the dead to remain there and to protect them:

> We are leaving you as we have finished your last ceremony. We want you, from now on, to look after your children (other members of the family may be mentioned). May no bad thing fall on them.[22]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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Similarity of beliefs and motives regarding grave adornment is best 764 illustrated by the types of articles found on graves in the Sea Islands. Such objects as partially filled medicine bottles, mirrors, broken pitchers, saucers and cups, mayonnaise jars, pickle jars, vaseline, cold cream, tobacco, and black pepper were placed on graves. Seashells were also commonly placed on graves. Other personal items included shaving brushes, toothbrushes, mirrors, combs, and belt buckles. In addition, twelve Gullah ministers reported to Samuel Lawton that other articles of food such as grapes, oranges, apples, bananas, bread, and cake were often placed on graves and soon eaten by animals and birds. Further (782) efforts to satisfy the spirits of the dead consisted of pouring water on the grave during a drought. This custom could have been for the purpose of (775) quenching the thirst of the spirit so that the dead would not disturb the living by seeking water.[23]

Gullah decoration of graves indicates a firm belief in the return of 764 ancestors from the world of the dead. Offerings on graves were state- 782 ments of homage and in these graveyards, one finds the strongest expres- 775 sions of African-inspired memories. Many objects are associated with or used to hold water. In BaKongo religion, deceased ancestors became white [171] • creatures called *bakulu*. They lived in the village of the dead, referred to as the land of all things white. This village was located under river beds and lakes. *Bakulu's* white spiritual transparency allowed them to return to the world of the living undetected. Sea shells, used on Gullah graves, for instance, are an important theme in BaKongo metaphysics. One BaKongo prayer which addresses the shells states, "As strong as your house, you shall keep my life for me. When you leave for the sea, take me along, that I may live forever." The essence of this prayer is recaptured by the late Bessie Jones of St. Simons Island, Georgia. She related:

> The shells stand for the sea. The sea brought us, the sea shall take us back. So the shells upon our graves stand for water, the means of glory and the land of demise.[24]

Just as sea shells and pottery express immortal existence, and the sig- 764 nificance of a water underworld, so the glittering, iridescent mirrors and 775 porcelain on Gullah graves reflect the light which represents the spirit. These objects, like water when struck by sunlight, are intimations of the flash of the separated spirit in symbolized flight. Mirrors, lamps, porcelain, and glass are spirit-embodying once they are placed on the graves.

764 775 (171) Their presence keeps the spirit away from the living. The significance of spiritual proximity in brilliance gave rise to the BaKongo custom of lighting bonfires on graves to lead one's soul to another world. Similarly, Gullah torchlight burials may have had a deeper meaning than simply lighting the path. Certainly the presence of lamps on African-American graves indicates that perhaps this was a means of lighting the way to the world beyond, and keeping away the deceased's spirit. Furthermore, the decorations imply the deceased's entrance into the fourth moment, a spiritual existence where all is light and brilliance. Breaking pottery and porcelain was perhaps not done to prevent theft, as some researchers believe, but may indicate the deceased's spiritual release and break with earthly life.[25]

764 171 823 Another interesting continuity between Gullah and African traditions in regard to burial is the position of the deceased. In Central West Africa, the coffin is placed so that the deceased faces eastward. Folklorist Elsie Parsons noted that Gullah graves were "invariably dug east to west, with the head to the west." Thomas Higginson wrote in his diary of a "very impressive" funeral for two black soldiers in his regiment. Just before the coffins were lowered, "an old man whispered to me that I must have their positions altered,—the heads must be towards the west." Higginson complied without asking why. Gullahs and Africans shared a concept of the cosmos. The world followed the sun from east to west.[26]

776 Sea Island slaves retained a belief in the power of agents of evil and easily included the Christian devil in their hierarchy. Ghosts, hags, plat-eyes, conjurers, and others were all instruments of Satan. At times their faith in God may not have surpassed their fear of the devil.[27] 776 754 On other occasions God could, for the sake of "the faithful," take the role of a conjurer and bring evil instead of good. Although Gullahs believed that Satan and his cohorts were mainly responsible for evil, they also felt that God was sometimes willing to bring evil down upon an adversary of one of His own. In the following illustration, God reportedly used His power in this way. July Brown was a high officer in one of the churches on Edisto Island. When he was interviewed in the 1930s for the Federal Writers Project, he related the story of how he once prayed a man to death:

> I been on de Savannah train goin' to Charleston. My wallet been jam down deep in my hip pocket. Must ob had 'bout twenty dollars in um. Lo and behold when I git to de Union station, I feel in my pocket to git street cyar money, and my wallet done gone! I notice dat when I come out ob de train uh black, shaap face

776 754 nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire roun de station and find out who he be. Dey say he uh man from John Island and dey call 'e name to me.

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron.[28]

789 822 (776) [342] This may be similar to the power of *nkisi*, essentially a positive force working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gullahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gullah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out "speerits." (775) Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29]

775 761 Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time.

771 776 171 A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex,

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771 representing honor, constancy, harmony, and perfection, while human-
776 ity occupied the center, ever striving to be godlike through a sense of
● 171 love, community, kinship, and cooperation. In addition, the good and
bad of the spirit world existed in both traditions although it was far more complex for Africans than for Gullahs. These beings included superhumans, animals, and objects without biological life.[30] Gullahs applied the
771 African ontology, adapted Christianity and bondage to it, and created a religion that employed spirituality as a means of self-preservation and as
177 a vital component of community life. It is, then, to the Gullahs' credit that though circumstances prevented them from rising up against slavery, they did not succumb to white cultural domination. Instead, they successfully rose above many of the negative ingredients of Christianity while assimilating certain other attributes which were synthesized with African culture. In bondage, Gullahs achieved elevation on the level of
[567] personal culture and the molding of community values. The edifying qualities of Gullah religious belief must be seen as having contributed much to that achievement, just as an element of truth must be recognized in the assertion that insofar as people develop their own culture they are not slaves.[31]

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from 1788 ed.), 13, 18, 74–75, 91–95, 141–42; Corry, *Windward Coast*, 94–95; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.), I: 3–7; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 232–39; Fyfe, *Sierra Leone*, 2–3, 5–6, 9, 65; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), xiv. 226.

28. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 236–53; Appendix A.

29. Kenneth Little, *The Mende of Sierra Leone* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), Paul, 1951), 28–29, 37–39; Fyfe, *Sierra Leone*, 5–6.

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32. Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Dewoin People* (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior 1955) 140–42; and *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) I: 2–3; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 255.

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2. *The Socioreligious Heritage*

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9. Harley, "Notes on Poro," 7.

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12. Little, "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 1, and "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 210–11; Harley, "Notes on Poro," 5; Dominique Zahan, *The Religion, Spirituality and Thought of Traditional Africa* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 53–65; Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–92; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 258.

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17. Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 76–82; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 26–27, 75–76; Harris & Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 14–18; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 216; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 63–64; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 35–39; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 11–12, Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 85–91.

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19. Laman, *Kongo*, II: 22–23; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 217–20, 246–57; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 71, 77–82, 315; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 158–71.

•171 113 771 775 20. Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 266–68, 278; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 92; MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 148–50; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 86; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 36–39; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 86; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 30–33; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.), 206; Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 161; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 181–203; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 132–58; John M. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 139–47; Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Honoring the Ancestors; Kongo-American Graves in the American South," *Southern Exposure* 28 (September–October, 1985): 42–57; "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 181–93; Irving E. Lowrey, *Life on the Old Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1911), 81–86; South Carolina Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27A, WPA, SCL: Folk-Lore Scrap-Book, "Mortuary Customs and Beliefs of South Carolina Negroes," from an article originally published in the *Atlanta Constitution* by May A. Waring, *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 7 (1894): 318–19.

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24. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 166–67, Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 38–39; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 71–72; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 22–23; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 828–29; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37, 110–14; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 130–32.

(791) 25. *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1847; *Minutes*; *Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which organization of societies was discussed, 271–72, January 7, 1842 and November 1, 1840, 12, BC; *SCA*, Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, 162, Penn School Papers, SHC; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

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27. Despite the exalted modern application of the term "ontology" in its reference to abstract being, "ontology" originally referred to that which belongs to existent finite being. See Walter Brugger, ed., *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Kenneth Baker (Spokane: Gonzaga University Press, 1972), 301–2 ("Ontology"). With regard to African culture and spirituality, the concept of being cannot be restricted to the physiological, as opposed to the psychological or fantastic sphere. 771 113 [171) ●

28. MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 261–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 173–76, 179, 183–85; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, Chapters 2–6; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–88; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 52; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 115–17; Mbiti *African Religions*, 2–16. 171 113

29. Michael Welton, "Themes in African Traditional Belief and Ritual," *Practical Anthropology* 18 (1971): 1–8; E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion, A Definition* (London: SMC Press, 1973), 61–68; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*. July 28, 1843, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 592. [771)

30. Mbiti *African Religions*, 210–13; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 106; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 190–91; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174, 183–84; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–5; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 41, 81–89; Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, Chapters 5–6; Jahn, *Muntu*, 110, 114–17; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 70–80; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 152–60.

31. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 16.

32. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 117–21; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 84.

33. Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 64–66; Jahn, *Muntu*, 121–27; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–202; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 48–49, 52, 59–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174–93; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 123–24; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 15–16, Chapters 11–14: Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 78–83; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 27–99; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 91–139; Amponsah, *Topics on Traditional Religion*, 48–68.

3. *Missionaries and Masters*

1. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Faith Vibert, "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: Its work for the Negroes in North America before 1783," *Journal of Negro History* 25 (April, 1933): 171, 182–84, 188–89; John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The* 175 797 113

000 himself understood.

539 (538) 16. The speaker repeats words and whole phrases for narrative effect.

17. *The Tar Baby* was told to the speaker in the manner in which he retold it, and he does not know why the tar baby is called *Brother Ligal*. In fact, he seemed surprised that I asked, though no version that I had heard before mentioned the tar baby by name.

[538] [193] 18. The narrator consistently used *that one* to refer to the rabbit's limbs and head. He apparently repeats the phrase to avoid using the pronoun *it*, which is not yet an established vocabulary item in Gullah.

[538] [171] 19. *The Buzzard and the Monkey* is in the genre of the Ananse and other animal tales told on the Sea Islands and throughout the Caribbean. The monkey personifies the Black man who is THOUGHT to be naif and unsophisticated by the socially mischievous Buzzard. The Buzzard is the trickster and personifies anyone who must be taught a lesson on Black ingenuity.

538 193 20. Gullah contains few consonant clusters, and speakers maintain the CVCV pattern by epenthesis or by deleting consonants; this pattern also occurs in Jamaican Creole:

114 neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approximated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this
538 dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the
(197) negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful
[197] lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

How directly and immediately these Georgia and South
538 Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals
171 may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from
178 numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests.""

114 During the decades following the work of Harris, Page, Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color
538 and, the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

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[171] [178] "Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on the continent—probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.

(569) "See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I ofting yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small leetle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my tarsk for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yeardy way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

CONCLUSION

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(533)

Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns, songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins with wild mirth," *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes macabres*," besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than the things banned by the Great Tabu.'"

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

OOD

As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

809
(831)
(171)

"Told to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for material of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of certain tales or 'toasts', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'toas'' he had boasted of knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too! I could tell you a heap o' dem ta'es, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge, 'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christensen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that, faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

"One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

Bennett, II, 62.

535 dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito
Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!")—
and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New
(243) Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for
(412) beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa
(Illustrations 7 and 8).[A] The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require
● (171) the aid of rhythmic songs.

There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of African
535 play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the
533 action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to
(177) an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated
after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is
often found in the religious songs.

One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue
533 to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this
West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and
water.[14]

In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi-
535 religious survival of African dancing—not a vocal performance as the name implies—
533 is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the simplest
539 of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in

O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve—
Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

533 In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any
transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically
prolonged You, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick
so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given
that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you
to get down on your knees and pray. On one of the old Heyward plantations bordering
535 on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival)
171 which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive
Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's

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[14] *"Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.*

A, [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 252, plates facing pp. 48 & 49--Analyst].

535 Island, called by the incongruous railroad term "Ball the Jack."[18] A few years 171 ago I saw it demonstrated by an old resident of Eleuthera, in the Bahamas, and its portrayal in the film *Sanders of the River*—for which "background shots" were made in villages along the Congo—indicates the region from which it originally came.

123 These dances, and such plantation activities as beating and fanning rice in the traditional African manner, provide effective material for those in the family group who are moving-picture addicts. It is also possible that such survivals persist on our plantations as are not to be found elsewhere in America this side of Haiti or Dutch Guiana; but do not be discouraged if they do not come when you call. It took years for me to see the ring-shout and the Buzzard Lope, and to see and hear the ring-play dances and songs, and the songs in an African dialect. It is a curious fact that the Negro rarely volunteers information—on the sound principle, perhaps, that if you tell nothing you have nothing to regret; and this is my reason for giving so many identifying titles and lines. If you know what to ask for, the work is half done.

000 For the plantation owner who cares to take the trouble, a barbecue provides the quickest route to results. If the procedure is not already known, an old resident will tell how one should be conducted, and who is competent to do the work. Both whites and blacks remember with nostalgic regret the days when a barbecue celebrated the end of the plantation harvest. For the sake of the picture, if dancing takes place after the feast instead of before, a generous fat-wood fire should be built as close to a spreading live oak as is safe, and a few prizes of old-fashioned white aprons, gilt hoop earrings, gay handkerchiefs for the heads of the women, and red bandanas for the necks of the men should be supplied. A temporary platform of broad boards laid—on two-by-fours or on any firm foundation—under the oak tree will repay the extra trouble. If the plantation is not too near a city, there is likely to be such dancing and entertainment as would make a Broadway producer green with envy. An occasion like this brings out the best—also the worst—in the way of talent, and gives an opportunity to evaluate what is to be found at the back door.

Old songs like "O de Robe" and "Norah Hist the Windah" are suitable for a restful evening; but let it end with shouting, as was customary at the old-time prayer meetings, and the whole atmosphere will change. There will be an inner

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[18] *I am told that the action employed in "Snake Hip" is similar to that used in "Ball the Jack."*

533 which produce an effect similar to that of castanets), or play upon the well-seasoned
534 and polished "old jawbone" of some ox, horse, or mule[19] with the aid of a blacksmith's rasp or a large key (a rhythmic tooth-rattling performance), or extract music (of a kind) from the U-shaped iron clevis used for hitching horses to the old-fashioned plow—which, when suspended by a string and beaten upon with its pin, makes a very fair "tr'angle," as the ante-bellum Negroes called it. If you live in the neighborhood of a cane-brake, there may be an old Negro who can demonstrate the kind of music to be obtained from a set of reed-pipes, called "quills," made from graduated lengths of cane tightly wedged into a frame. On occasion, a washboard—played with a thimble—and a frying pan may be added. Now and then a fiddle, "box" (guitar), mouth-organ, or jew's harp is heard in rural districts, but rarely a drum—except in the hands of musically illiterate members[20] of the Sanctified Church who have done as much real harm to the Negro's innate gift of rhythm as have the white man's hymn books.

In New Orleans, wooden horns and home-made drums (made out of nail kegs), with skin tightly stretched over one end, were used in olden times, but were forbidden on plantations where the blacks outnumbered the whites. Planters were well aware of the ability of some of their slaves to use them in the same manner as
[202] we use the Morse code,[21] and it was not considered safe to risk the general uprising which might have resulted.

533 The good-natured ingenuity of the Negroes in circumventing plantation rules speaks well for their ready wit, and it always rouses my admiration to see the way in which the McIntosh County "shouters" tap their heels on the resonant board floor[22] to imitate the beat of the drum their forebears were not allowed to have. Those who hear the records of the musical chants which accompany the ring-shout—made for me by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner—cannot believe that a drum is not used, though how the effect is achieved with the heels alone—when they barely leave the floor—remains a puzzle (Illustration 24). A

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[19] *It may even be decorated with ribbons, as in the old days.*

[20] *Joe Loman once said. "The Sanctified people must think God is deef, they make so much noise."*

[175] [21] *In 1740, following the Stono uprising of 1739, the great slave act was passed. One section prohibited the beating of drums or the blowing of horns, although in cities this provision was not rigidly observed.*

[171] [22] *I am told, however, that in South Africa the natives use their heels on the sun-baked clay of the village square in precisely the same manner.*

A, [For Illustration 24, See Category 535, plate facing p. 144--Analyst]

000 In a series of articles on Gold-Coast music in the *London Musical Times* (1932), Mr. Ward says:

> Africans are at least as musical as any race in Europe, possibly more musical than any. . . . Their harmony is as far developed as European harmony in the sixteenth century; it sounds very different, but it is not inferior. And in rhythm Africa is two centuries ahead of Europe. Their music is the most alive of any of their arts, and shows no sign of dying; new songs are constantly appearing, and quickly spread over the country. Whether it will survive the attack of bad Western music and the sapping of tribal institutions and religion, with which it is intimately connected, remains to be seen; ultimately music is threatened by the same dangers as other African arts, though it seems likely to resist more strongly. But if it could learn from Europe modern developments in form and harmony, African music should grow into an art as magnificent as any that the world has yet seen.

533 171 The relationship of our slave music to that of the African Negro is such that what is said of one applies in the main to the other. This fact gives particular weight to the authoritative words of Mr. Ward.

533 177 178 It seems to me that the ultimate fate of this music rests with the owners of Southern plantations and with those who mold public taste through radio programs. Within the last year, there are indications that up-to-date young Negroes are beginning to appreciate the authentic slave songs; and the increasing popularity of exotic African tones and rhythms among white people leads me to believe that the pendulum of taste is swinging toward the music of Africa and away from the European preponderance of melody and harmony. In this trend lies a ray of hope for the survival of the contribution made by the Afro-American slave.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

212 567 show that the "diary" was in reality not a record of Old Bilali's life. Disappointing as this discovery may be to those who are primarily interested in his history, it is still possible, according to Mr. Greenberg, to draw certain conclusions about him from the character of the manuscript.

He was apparently a fanatical Mohammedan, for the "diary" consists mainly of descriptions of "ablutions and the call to prayer." Mistakes in the Arabic script,[17] along with "repetitions, incorrect word divisions, and incorrect arrangement of the excerpts," indicate that he was trying to reproduce what he had learned orally. Since "books are first taught by oral memorization," Mr. Greenberg conjectures that "at the time of his departure from Africa the writer was still a young student."

175 567 It was reassuring to find that Mr. Greenberg's deductions tallied with what Katie Brown, Bilali's great-granddaughter, had told me about him years before. According to her, he was captured when not fully grown, and went to Sapelo from Nassau with his wife and children. Where he spent the intervening years no one knows. Both Katie and her cousin, Shadrach Hall, tell me that the three oldest children were named Margaret, Hester, and Charlotte (Cotty). The others bore African names:[18] Fatima (Shad says she was named for her mother), Nyrrabuh or [55] [171]

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[17] Concerning the possibility "of discovering the origin and status of the writer" through the character of the script he used, Mr. Greenberg says: "The fact that the Arabic script was of the Maghrebine. or Western variety, and that the Risala is a legal work of the Malekite school, which is dominant in appproximtely the same regions as the Western style of writing, would seem to indicate that the writer came from some part of northwest Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunis) or from the Western Sudan. The confusion of 'd' and 'l' in several cases points strongly to the Sudan, since this pronunciation is unknown elsewhere. It is doubtful whether local varieties of the Maghrebine script in the Sudan can be distinguished at the present state of our knowledge; at any rate, no attempt has hitherto been made to do this, and therefore, this approach would seem to be closed to us pending further research."

In Notes on Northern Africa, the Sahara and Soudan, by W. B. Hodgson, the birthplace of Bul-ali is established in a letter from James Hamilton Couper of Hopeton plantation, Georgia. This letter is given in full, and states that his "driver Tom" and Mr. Spalding's Bul-ali were intimate friends. Both spoke the Foulah language. and were from the Kingdom of Bambara. Tom was born on the Niger River in Kianah, between Jenne and Timbuctoo, but Bul-ali was from Timboo.

[18] Lyell mentions the singular taste displayed by Negro parents in naming their children: January, April, Monday, and Hard Times. He did not know what Dr. Turner has discovered: the slaves followed a West African custom in naming their children according to the time of birth, conditions surrounding it, or the temperament of the child. Bad Boy, Peanut, Blossom, and July are names found on the Georgia coast. In West African Studies Miss Kingsley tells us that soon after a child is born it is given "the name by which it is to be called. A second name which the child usually takes is that of the day of the week on which it is born."

175 Yarrabuh, Medina, and Binty (probably Bintu), the youngest, who was the only
567 one of the family group who could not speak French. The others spoke English,
553 French, and their native tongue. Why was it that Binty spoke only two languages?
174 This fact raises still another interesting question.

091 Katie's grandmother was Margaret and Shad's was Hester. Both were appar-
175 ently Mohammedans, since Katie and Shad remember fragments of their prayers
and, in particular, the rice balls which the half-famished children were given when
567 the sun went down on a certain fast day. They were vague about the time of year,
252 but both gave me the identical recipe for making this ceremonial food. Katie said they got a peck of white rice from Darien and soaked it overnight. In the morning surplus water was drained off and the rice was put into the well-washed mortar. All the larger children were set to beating it. When it was fine, enough white sugar was added to make it taste like white loaf-sugar candy. Unlike a similar West African rice ball,[19] this type was not cooked. Shad said the pieces were made into dumplings, and that his grandmother used syrup if she could not get sugar. But Katie particularized and said the paste was rolled into balls "the size of small fowls' eggs" which were then put on a fanner and set aside to harden. When the children lined up to receive the rice balls, which were called "sarika,"[20] the grandmother's eye was on the lookout for grimy hands. Any child whose hands were not perfectly clean had to leave and do a good job while the others waited. As she handed the sarika to a child she would say either "Sarika dee" or "Ah-me, Ah-me."

175 Portions of the prayer used by Bilali and his wife as they "got down flat," when it
came time to pray, were remembered by both descendants. The two Mohammedans
567 would hold a long string of beads. As Bilali moved a bead along he would say "Karo
782 baro." Fatima would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." When he moved the next bead he would say: "Saka baro" and again she would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." Shad says he remembers hearing that Bilali ended his prayers with "Mohammedoo." According to Charles S. Wylly, in *Seed Sown in Georgia*, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding,

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551 *She gives the names of the days in the Fanti language, and it is interesting to find that a boy born on Monday is called Kujot—probably Cudjo—and on Tuesday, Quabina, which was the*
190 *name of a faithful slave at Retreat Plantation. Friday's child was called Kufi, and it is now easy to see where Kuffie Jones got his name.*

[19] *Described by M. J. Field, in* Gold Coast Food *(The College Press, Pamphlet No. 3).*

[20] *Dr. Turner attributes the name sarika to the Bambara tribe, which inhabits the greater part of the French Sudan. This tribe is said by Geoffrey Gorer to be fanatically Mohammedan, and reared in a warlike tradition.*

175 her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him
567 by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went
764 to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

764 In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of
171 the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our
764 Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits
(775) is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away
(784) a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress,
(777) you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[26]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored
764 man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in
776 piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry
775 it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

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[26] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura*
(775) *never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a washstand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

764 [775] [776] seen on the island. Later he returned with three men to get his ox. This time the dog did not appear—but the cart went back empty.

[178] [775] In the Sapelo burying ground I have seen many evidences of the African custom of placing useful articles on the tops of graves. The Negroes generally say they are for ornamentation, but on Sapelo I was told that the alarm clocks—of which there were many—are for the purpose of waking the dead at Doomsday. At the Petersville graveyard, lamps and electric-light bulbs are as popular as cups and pitchers.

764 171 Work also tells us in the above-mentioned article that "Among the Zulus, pottery is broken by the widow over the grave,"[27] and René Maran, in *Batouala*, speaks of the same custom, specifying that the dead man's pots are placed upon his clothing. With his easy chair on top of everything, he is prepared for living the life of the dead. The pictures that accompany an article on "Fetishism in Congo Land"[28] by E. J. Glave, one of Stanley's pioneer officers, give positive proof of the origin of the custom. One, portraying the grave of a Congo Chieftain, shows the same type of decoration that is in use among our Southern rural Negroes. In addition, the author gives a picture of a distorted "charm root" which explains the use of eccentric wood growths in the decoration of the Negro graveyard at Sunbury. Headstones like the cement work found in the Sunbury yard, are a modern innovation. Mungo Park tells us that he "never observed that any stone was placed over the grave, as a monument or memorial." The noticeable lack of interest displayed by our Negroes in providing any sort of marker for their dead, other than a couple of stakes which soon disappear, may be accounted for in this way.

481 562 178 [764] The custom observed by the men, in walking apart from the women, to a baptism and to a "buryin'," is apparently based on an African tradition. Maran tells us: "It is not right to walk side by side. A custom as old as the Negro, dictated single file." To this day older members of the race walk single file—the men in front. In the old-time funeral processions the women and children followed the men, or else walked on the opposite side of the road—now they ride in automobiles. In many Negro churches, the men sit on the left side, the women on the right.[29]

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[27] *Our Southern Indians made holes in the bottom of the pots they put in graves, so that the spirit of the pot could accompany the spirit of the dead man to the other world.*

[28] Century, April, 1891.

[29] *In the Friends Meeting I attended in my youth, the women sat on the left side of the meeting-house and the men on the right.*

342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
796 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
782 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12)A Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[777] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was
auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the
roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
353 which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[123] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a
[754] hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[30] I used the financial
section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14)B it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the
picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra
Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his inter-
vention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
777 except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in oc-
782 cult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my
763 empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half.
The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

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[30] *A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in* "Items of Folk-Lore from Ba-
● [171] hama Negroes," *in Vol. 17 of the* Journal of American Folk-Lore. "*If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night.*"

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

787 to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—
763 now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death
two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer
had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry,
754 all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of
Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-
appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana.
When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had
been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would.
To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of
tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The
other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from
the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into
the fire.

789 I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off
bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for
believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your
ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. Ac-
(177) cording to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts
of Africa.

Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a con-
567 jurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring
754 implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always re-
197 tained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah
Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living
in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that
Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the
Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of
three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect,
but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—
Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

Mrs. A. S. Hilman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me
567 there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his
754 magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one
(551)

000 How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Granman. How are you, brother?"
751 The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too otherwise
784 the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why
[793] there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and
[796] also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who
793 seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the
537 younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their
matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not
until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat
combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake.
At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has
no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that
appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in
Black Roadways, under the name of "trooping."[22] She believes that the exercise "if
593 persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication
537 of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the
787 source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical
796 best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of
sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly
beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality
that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping
point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up
787 with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion
786 she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child
796 I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the
church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House
of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is
inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

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[22] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former*
[171] *slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica."* (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)

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796 787 786 an hour. She was covered with a coat and left where she fell until she returned to consciousness.

[171] In *African Majesty* Egerton speaks of the same hands-off treatment, saying: "When persons not given to such behavior fall down in a fit, they are left where they fall, and no one touches them." It is a very easy matter for a Negro—even in this country—to become possessed. I have seen this phenomenon happen too many times among our Georgia Negroes to believe that the Negro patterned his behavior after that of white fanatics.[34] The chances are that the whites copied the blacks, since it is a matter of record that both races attended the same revivals. It is also possible that the whites took over the African song-form, and the system of punctuating the sermon with responses like the Negroes' "Tell 'im!" "Preach the Word!" "Go on!" and "Amen!" I heard a Negro preacher say to an unresponsive congregation: "You gotta help me. You needn't think you can sit back there an' do nothin'." From then on, he held their attention, and received the emotional support that is required to become a successful evangelist. This form of encouragement evidently [171] came out of Africa, for Captain Canot, in his *Adventures of an African Slaver*, tells us that "It is the custom in African palavers to give token of assent by a sigh, a groan, a slight exclamation, or shout, when anything affecting, agreeable, or touching is uttered by a speaker."

796 786 Where the "holy laugh" came from I am unable to say, but it is clearly of a piece with the unusual observances already mentioned. I had read about it, but heard it employed on several occasions before I recognized the mirthless staccato "ha-ha" for what it was. It is unobtrusively introduced to carry on a rhythmical phrase, in much the same way as the enclitical a helps to fill any gap which may interfere with the undulating flow of a song.

763 764 171 There is far more of tradition connected with the religious observances of the Negroes than appears on the surface. The custom of sending messages by the dying to those who have gone before, moaning, singing, and "hollerin'" while "settin' up" with the dead, holding elaborate funerals, preaching the funeral sermon when it suits the convenience of the pastor—anywhere from one to three months after the "buryin'"—each one has its counterpart in Africa. Egerton, who stayed in one

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[34] Melville J. Herskovits says in his Handbook of Social Psychology: "The religious hysteria that marks the manner of worship by certain white groups in the United States is so different from the kind of evangelical excitation found in Europe that it can be referred only to influences—in some cases, indeed, two or three times removed—which emanated from Negro religious gatherings."

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763 spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents,
764 mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a
•171 [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed
until the dry season."

793 Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of
spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One
796 I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the
537 subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a
mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!"
it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the
substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're
down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do
nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the
771 religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh
181 rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no
need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many
children as colored people.

175 When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no
one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me
567 the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves
191 of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side
of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into
the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away."
No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few
175 words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves
and were prone to suicide,[35] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the
567 story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo
Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went
'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of
their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted
to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

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[35] *For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.*

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175 567 a short time through Florida before its annexation [1819]; yet one fourth of the population of this lower country is said to have come direct from Africa." [36] A little calculation indicates that he was misinformed either as to smuggling or as to population. I am inclined to believe it was the former, as the last slaves to be smuggled into Glynn County arrived in November, 1858,[37] on the *Wanderer*, and the last African of that group died in Brunswick only a few years ago.

Because of the illicit slave trade that continued for economic reasons to such a late date on the coast of Georgia, we probably have more African survivals here than are to be found in sections of the Atlantic coast which were settled before the slave traffic was technically abolished. This may account for the similarity between 538 the proverbs of Africa and those in use among our older Negroes. A few illustrations 171 will suffice to establish the relationship: When I asked Joe—so dark that protective coloration serves him in the shade—why it was that I never had any trouble with dark Negroes, while those of a light color were often a different matter, he explained with a wide grin: "High yalla pizens the stream." On another occasion I asked him what to do about a certain singer who persisted in double-crossing his group. His reply probably had its origin in Africa: "My ole gran'mother use t' say: 'Them's the kind you gotta feed with a long spoon.'" In *Suriname Folklore*, Melville and Frances Herskovits quote a proverb found among the Negroes of Dutch Guiana that is very similar: "When you eat with the devil then you must have a long fork." In McIntosh County I heard a Negro preacher tell his congregation that when a man dug a pit for his neighbor, at the same time he dug one for himself. Another Suriname proverb carries the same warning: "When a person digs a hole to put another in he himself falls into it." Once I said to Bessie that it looked as though she had forgotten me. In disclaiming such a charge she quoted "the old people" as saying: "Never forget the bridge that carries you over." A. F. Chamberlin reports a corresponding proverb from the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria, which warns against kicking away the ladder by which one rose. As can be seen, the advantage of using a proverb lies in its indirection. It allows no accusation to be pinned against the speaker, and generally displays a whimsical humor that is more telling than any literal presentation of facts.

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[36] Second Visit to the United States.

[37] *J. A. Tillinghast, in* The Negro in Africa and America, *says that the importation of Negroes from the Guinea coast did not cease until after the Emancipation Proclamation, and quotes Professor W. E. B. DuBois* (The Suppression of the Slave-Trade) *as saying that the Act of 1807, forbidding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, "came near being a dead letter."*

195 In the employment of a single derisive word the Negro is indeed a consummate artist. I know a cook with a disarming smile who accomplished what lectures never could. All she did was to point humorously to a puddle of clothes left on the floor by an untidy child and say: "Snake." Anyone who knows the snake's habit of shedding its skin in any place where it feels the urge will understand why that child's clothing was ever after left on a chair.

Another example of this knack of using the one right word was furnished me when I gave a "lift" to a Negro going my way. I asked where he wanted to get out. He replied casually: "Oh, jus' let me out at Lord Bing's." Although I use a fictitious surname, there is only one Negro on the island who could possibly qualify for the title.

142 144 There is, I believe, a biological reason for Lord Bing's feeling of importance. He is the living image of one of several bronze heads dug up in 1938 at Ife in Southern Nigeria, and believed to be portraits of rulers, kept as a record.[38] William Bascom, who was in Ife at the time of the discovery of these heads, says (in an article in the *Illustrated London News* [39] which should be reprinted in this country): "It is possible to identify the exact counterparts of these heads among the people of Ife today. Also, interestingly enough, striking resemblances between some of the heads and individual Negroes of the United States have been noticed. A large proportion of the ancestors of American Negroes are, indeed, known to have come from this region of West Africa." Members of Lord Bing's own family exclaim at the likeness (Illustrations 18 and 19) A and it is clear that he is a "throw-back" mentally and physically. In addition, the Yoruba tribe, to whom the people of Ife belong, are said by N. G. Ballanta, in "Music of the African Races," [40] to have the most highly artistic dance songs of all the tribes he investigated from the Senegal to the Cameroon. It is significant that this St. Simon's Negro is a good singer, and belongs to the family that has given me the most help in the preservation of the characteristic African rhythms. [533]

538 171 Although the West Africans were not supposed to have a literature because of their lack of a written language—except in a few tribes—the tales brought to America by the slaves have entertained old and young, black and white, whenever and

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[38] *Others of the bronzes (thirteen in all) are assumed to be likenesses of deities.*

[39] "*The Legacy of an Unknown Nigerian Donatello,*" April 8, 1939.

[40] West Africa, June 14, 1930.

A, [For Illustrations 18 & 19, see Category 142, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

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538 wherever heard. The humor [41] and keen knowledge of human nature they display
•171 indicate clearly enough that the Negro realized the necessity of keen wits if the little
(522) man was to survive in a world governed by brute force. Ages ago, apparently, the race learned another valuable lesson: to convey an idea by inference rather than to
538 state it baldly. The stories given me by Peter Davis—who learned them from his Uncle John—illustrate this fact, and demonstrate the way scanty training in the sea-
(115) island school-rooms was supplemented by older members of such families as had the story-telling gift:

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf in deh Well

539 One day Buh Rabbit wuz walkin' thru de woods an' 'e met an' ole well. Deh wuz two buckets in it—one went up when de udder went down. Buh Rabbit say to hese'f: "Deh's nice water in dat well. Believe I'll go down an' get me a drink—some ole fool'll come alon' an' pull me up." By an' by Buh Wolf come whistlin' down de road. Buh Rabbit call: "Hey, Buh Wolf, want some cool watah?" Buh Wolf say: "I wouldn' mine!" Buh Rabbit say: "You jes' git in de bucket an' come right on down heah." Buh Wolf was hebbier dan Buh Rabbit, so when he got in de bucket an' start down, he meet Buh Rabbit half way comin' up. Buh Rabbit say: "O boy, dat's de way in dis worl'—some comin' up an' some goin' down. Well, I'll be seein' y'u some mo'."

(191) In her chapter on "Folk Art," [42] Martha Beckwith gives an example of the "so-called animal talk . . . often reported from African fields." Bessie Cuyler, of St. Simon's, gives a good illustration of this talk. She explains that, when the preacher comes for a visit, the poultry gets very excited, the rooster most of all:

He say: Preacher comin', Preacher comin'!
The guinea hen say: I knowed it, I knowed it!
The goose say: Tell it, tell it!
The duck say: Hah, hah, hah!

But the turkey gobbler is a wise old bird, an' he got fussed at all de noise an' when de rooster keep sayin' Preacher comin', Preacher comin', he sputter: "Schu-u-uw!" an' say:

What de hell do I care
You betta look out fo' you' neck!

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[41] *An example of Afro-American humor runs true to form:* A child calls to its mother "O mamma look dat da *fulafafa!*" The mother with a superior air says: "Gal, you bin in dis buckra country [*buckra is white man*] so long, an' can't say *wulisapapa*." The joke lies in the fact that "*fulafafa*" and "*wulisapapa*" both mean woodpecker in an African dialect.

[42] Black Roadways, a Study of Jamaican Folk Life.

539 191 Miss Beckwith is evidently right in assuming that this form of amusement represents "the breakdown into sport of an outworn belief in the claim by sorcerers to a knowledge of the language of beasts."

192 Discovering an unsuspected connection with Africa in words which sound as though they might be English, but really aren't,[43] provides almost as much satisfaction as finding new songs or dances. Conservative Negroes still retain many of these words—particularly in the old songs—and such are passed on to Dr. Turner in the hope that he may know their meaning. From his *West-African Survivals in the Vocabulary of Gullah* I have learned much that has been an enigma to me in the past, but even Dr. Turner is puzzled by "giffy," which on Sapelo means damp. Years ago I heard the great blue heron in the marshes called "Poor Joe," and judged his lean body had given him his name. Not at all. *Podzo* is the name of a similar heron in Africa. We call a certain type of southern tortoise a "cooter." In the neighborhood of Timbuctoo its near relative is called a *kuta*. When I first visited the Georgia coast I heard the name "tackies" applied to the small wild horses found on the salt marshes of the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia.[44] Now I find that *taki* is the West African name of a horse. The same with the "tabby" houses built for the slaves out of old oyster shells, sand, and cement (made from burning live oyster shells in pine cribs built for the purpose). In Africa the name for a house of similar construction is *tabax*. When a Southerner hears the word "tote" he knows that it means to carry; a very similar word, *tota*, from the Congo, means to pick up. Southern children know the "joggle board," or see-saw, but they do not know that the name comes from the West African word, *dzogal*, meaning to rise. In the old days you asked a colored woman where to find her husband. If she said at the "jook," it meant that he was in the rather ungodly place where drink was sold and good women were not supposed to go. According to the Vocabulary, *dzug* means "to misconduct oneself" and it is easy to see how "jook house," in the Gullah dialect, derived its name. In *Gentlemen, Be Seated*, Dailey Paskman and Sigmund Spaeth tell us that Africa possessed an instrument known as the *banjar* made of a large gourd

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[43] *By this time I should be wary of laughing up my sleeve when the Negro uses such words—but white people are like this. My last nugget was found through Mrs. Cate's keen sight. I had told her of the amusing application of the horse breeder's term "in foal" to the condition of one of my singers. With a fresh eye, she spotted in Dr. Turner's Gullah Vocabulary the word "en(in)fo le" meaning "pregnant."*

[44] *These hardy little horses are said to be descendants of those left by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century.*

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192 with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word *swanga* as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as *Sandi, Suki, Aba, Bina,* and *Beti,* that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda, Mandigo, Dembo, Sambo, Cudjo, Quash,* and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

192 The survival of African food names such as gumbo or okra (famous in New
Orleans), benne[46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goobers or peanuts,
252 suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens.
171 Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished
114 by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?"[47] Of all
192 who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist
171 the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musi-
cal" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names
175 for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was
567 the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to
[192] whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the
latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

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[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

[824] [46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man
Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and
[760] give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North Boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.

175
567 gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me
[159] how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober patch" in Africa. Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when she and her companions were discovered.

567 We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of
754 her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old
159 Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land, and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh
175 tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger [49]—took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her
(683) own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in*
● [171] *West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular methods of disposing of African witches.[50]

178 Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

[49] *His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?*

[50] *Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."*

178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed
itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity
for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct
continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia
planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always
● [171] were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of
work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to discover
[533] that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed
to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves
326 were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial
171 has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively
simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account
certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence
of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is
obvious.

George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who
567 could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton
322 press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying
out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro
567 slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented
335 him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it
342 said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing
curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Incachee
567 Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for
326 holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in
the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics
trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet-
322 makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of
[335] Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21).A Both made a
[461] number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length.
[171] These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate
that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure, enough to eat, and
461 greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the

517 A, [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

461 forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in
517 mind that *Art for Art's* sake never existed in the life of the African natives. Their
dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this
(177) attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to
imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

533 Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side
17 issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes
with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would
be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is
shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of research
533 employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be
114 considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthropologist
who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in
17 Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word
of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate
phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

African Songs

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171

FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing." [51]

(177) The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

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[51] *Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.*

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from the tune (all but the exclamatory phrase show the influence of the white man's hymns), this is what I got:

(539)

Freewillum!
Gwine home to sine de oshun.
Relig-jun to-d'-New Jerusalem-I-bring-good-news-a-tatta-ho!
My soul sine de oshun.

The third line is extraordinary. Following fast on "New Jerusalem," the words run together up the scale into a falsetto squeak ending abruptly on "ho!" exactly as would be expected of songs from Africa. When a group of Negro school-children heard Rogers sing it, they went into spasms of laughter—and they had good cause, for the song is astonishingly strange.

2. ROCKAH MH MOOMBA

The second of Dublin's songs has few words that could pass for English, but, like several of the shouts, it ends with a stamp. The tune is not so wild as "Freewillum" and has not its distinctly primitive character. The last time I saw Rogers he told me that I was right in imagining it was a dance song. "When de ole man Dublin and his daughter Bessie get togedder she [22] shouted; when she say 'quank' de ole woman jump way over, and den de ole man jump, and den turn back again. Do de same t'ing ober, ebery time":

(539)

Rockah mh moomba
Cum bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
I rockah mh moomba
(Cum) bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!

---

[22] One gender did duty for all in the old days, and the first "she" undoubtedly stood for "they," and the second "she" for "he."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island

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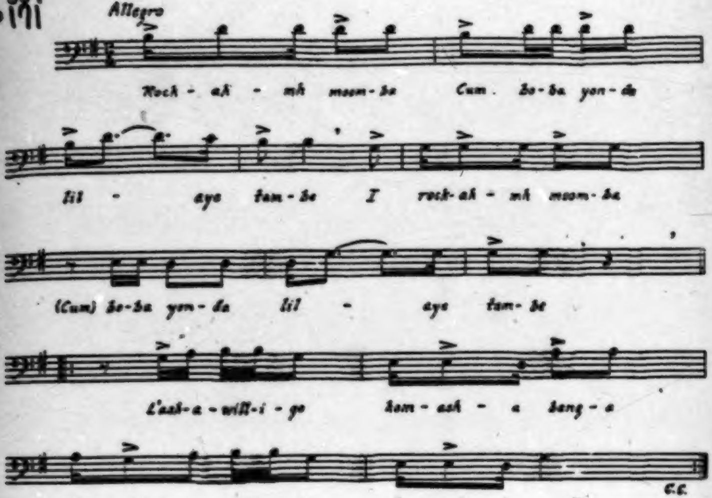
Allegro
Rock - ah - mh moom - be Cum . bo - ba yon - de
lil - aye tam - be I rock - ah - mh moom - ba
(Cum) bo - ba yon - de lil - aye tam - be
L'ash - a - will - i - go hom - ash - a bang - a
L' - ash - a - will - i - go hom - ash - a quank
G.C.

[p.47]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 539 •171 This song and the one following evidently had a common origin. Perhaps "Ole Dublin" and "Gullah Ben" came from the same part of Africa, or were friends in Liberty County. Both songs are suggestive of the rhythm of the "ring-play":

Wa'k[53] Bil-le Au-ba
Be bul-o
Pretty fine lady
Be bul-o

I WOK OM A MO-NA

The following song was sung by Gullah Ben, who—like Dublin—came from Africa. He taught it to Ben Delegal, who in turn taught it to Amelia Dawley:

Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wok om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa willigo sehowyh bunga
Lilli hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.
Hassa willigo sehowyh bunga
Lilli hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa willigo sehowyh quenda here
Hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.
Hassa willigo sehowyh quenda here
Hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.

[53] Pronounce "Wa'k" to rhyme with "rock."

7. Pounding Corn in West Africa

[facing p. 48]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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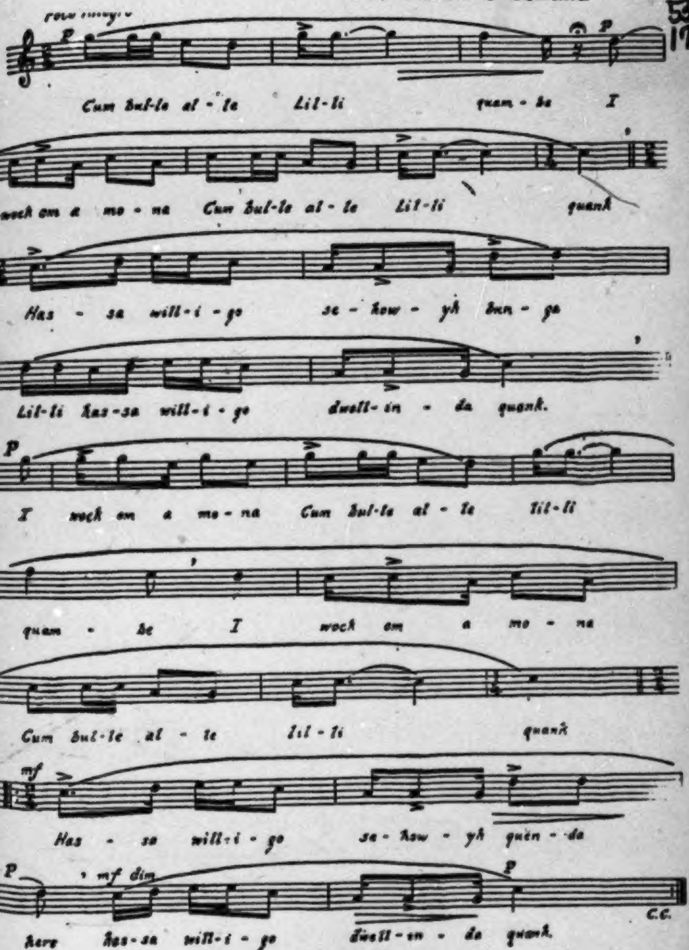
p
Cum bul-le al - le Lil-li quam - be I
woch em a mo - na Cum bul-le al - le Lil-li quank
Has - sa will-i - go se - how - yh bun - ga
Lil-li has-sa will-i - go dwell- in - da quank.
p
I woch em a mo - na Cum bul-le al - le lil-li
quam - be I woch em a mo - na
Cum bul-le al - le lil - li quank
mf
Has - sa will-i - go se - how - yh quen - da
p mf dim p
here has-sa will-i - go dwell-in - da quank
C.C.

[p.49]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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BYUM BY-E

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The development of the religious song of the Negro under the influence of the white man's instruction is interestingly shown in this song. A better example could not be found.[54] Nancy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, learned it from her grandmother who, Nancy tells me, "came from Africa and was old in 1862."

It speaks well for Nancy's intelligence that she sings the song as it was taught her, softening certain syllables—just as "Shisha Ma-ley" did—without attempting to correct the English.

(963)

The song appears to have originated at the death-bed of "Shisha Shalun," who sang the first melodious verse with calm resignation:

(539)

Fa-le-well Shisha Maley
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
An shollen gane en mone
Shisha har lepentin shu beleven
Heaven gates are oven
I love Shisha Maley yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum
I love my shisha yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum.
(Repeat, substituting Shalun for Maley)

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[54] The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) -1942

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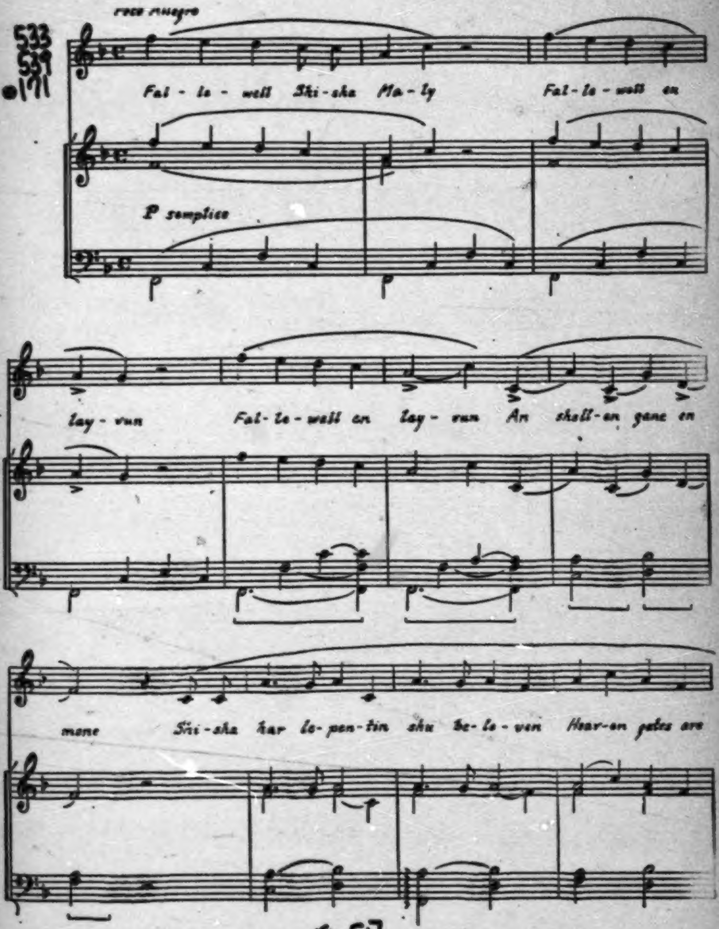
Poco Allegro
Fal - le - well Shi - sha Ma - ly Fal - le - well en
p semplice
lay - vun Fal - le - well en lay - vun An shell - en gane en
mone Shi - sha har le - pen - tin shu be - le - ven Heav - en gates are

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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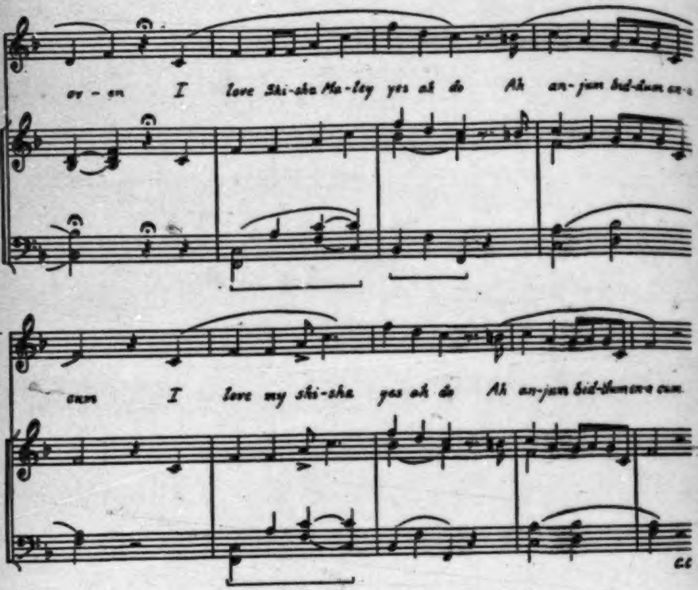

ev - en I love Shi-sha Ma-ley yes ah do Ah an-jum bid-dum ev-
cum I love my shi-sha yes ah do Ah an-jum bid-thumeva cum

[163]

When Shisha Ma-ley made her response, grief apparently got the upper hand. She lapsed into her native tongue as well as the song-form of Africa,[13] and gave vent to her sorrow in these poignant lines:

Shisha Shalun gone en lay-vun
An sholl en gane en moan
Lor' Shisha!
Missa sholl en ganey moan
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by e-e
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by-e
(Repeat)

[179]

[13] *In spite of the fact that one verse shows the influence of the white man's hymns while the other reverts to the African form, there is a homogeneous quality that demonstrates the ability of the Negro to make the creation his own.*

[p. 58]

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5. BYUM BY-E

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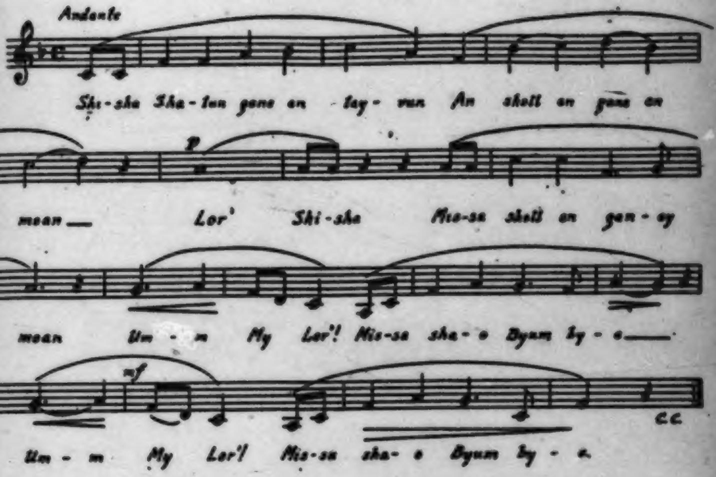
Andante
Shi-sha Sha-tan gone an - lay - run An shell an gone an
moan __ Lor' Shi-sha Mis-sa shell an gon-ay
mean Um - m My Lor'! Mis-sa sha - o Byum by - e ___
Um - m My Lor'! Mis-sa sha - o Byum by - e.
p
mf
CC

533
171

"U-m-m,"[38] hummed with the lips closed, is a strangely moving tone (rightly named a moan), and in conjunction with the exclamatory words, "My Lor'! Missa-shao!" followed by the roll of the African word, "Byum by-e," gives emotional depth to this unusual song.

"Maum Kate" Wilson of Darien used to sing the following phrase: "Sumanar kusi luki tu," over and over, but no one ever learned what it meant. There are other songs in which half the words are African, but without the music it is useless to give them.

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[38] *An Anglo-African official tells me that the African side-drum (often called "the hypocrite" from the many different tones it is capable of producing through change of pressure of the arm under which it is held) makes a sound very similar to the hummed "U-m-m-m" so frequently employed in the slave songs. This humming is evidently another African survival. Its use is mentioned by the Denis-Roosevelts as common to the Belgian Congo. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in* Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent, *says it is popular among the Zulus: "sometimes . . . a whole chorus will hum together with closed lips."*

CHAPTER THREE

Afro-American Shout Songs

535 114 192 There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word "shout" in designating the religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during plantation days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word *Saut* (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation for the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen the Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.

535 Shouting appears to be of two types: Along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina the most popular form is the ring-shout, in which a number of dancers move counter-clockwise in a circle. (Illustration 22.)A Occasionally individuals are seen in church using the same rhythmic shout step. In North Carolina and Virginia, however, the solo performance is apparently the only form in use, and the ring-shout seems to be unknown.

535 171 178 (199) Those who have traveled in Africa, and have seen native dancing, are convinced that the shout of the American Negro is nothing more than a survival of an African tribal dance, and that the accompanying chants in their form and melody are quite as typical of Africa as the dance itself.[1] It is recognized, of course, that the words of the Old Testament have been substituted by the Negro for those of his native land. When the slaves grew more familiar with the English language, they evolved the more complicated religious songs that are now popularly called spirituals.

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[1] *Records Nos. 6 and 10 of the series made in the Belgian Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition are strikingly similar,*

A, [For Illustration 22, see Category 535, plate facing p. 128--Analyst]

THE BUZZARD LOPE—A SOLO DANCE

535 Since 1915 I have known that such a dance as the Buzzard Lope[6] could be found in the neighborhood of St. Simon's; but the Negroes of that section always told me it was done on some far-off island, such as St. Catherine's or Sapelo. Over ten years ago I asked the same question of a newcomer, as a matter of routine, which I had for years put to the other shouters: "Can you do the Buzzard Lope?" When she said: "Yes'm," I was a bit stunned . . . but she could, to perfection. To my surprise, however, I found that a number who had previously denied such a gift were close seconds. (Illustrations 23 and 26)A

53 This group used an old religious song with narrative lines of a suitable character. In ante-bellum days the slaves called the graveyard "the ole field":

THROW ME ANYWHERE

Throw me anywhere
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere, Lord
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere, Lord
In that ole field
Members,[7] you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die
In that ole field.

---

(191) [6] *Dances simulating the peculiar characteristics of animals are popular in Africa; and Mr. Herskovits tells me he has seen a similar dance in Dahomey.*

[7] *Deacons, preachers, brothers, sisters, and mother are all mentioned as wanting to die "In that old field."*

A, [For Illustrations 23 & 26, see Categories 535 & 142, plates facing pp. 129 and 160 respectively--Analyst]

121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church
observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave
(533) songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of
Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled
as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter
and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which
may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of
(128) them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the
ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so
much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of
● (171) them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the
section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to
795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation
171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what
explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans'
761 concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon
796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in,
533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The
younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come
to the Cabin and "show them the way."

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[1] *Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-*
(152) *edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his*
rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or
(782) *two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some*
appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

[2] *Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence*
(787) *told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish*
towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She dried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his *Second Visit to the United States.*

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THE BELL DONE RING

533 171 In a collection of *African Music* recorded by Laura C. Boulton a war song[10] is given from the Tuareg tribe of the French Sudan, near Timbuctoo, which is strikingly similar to a sermon song of Henry Shaw's, even to the peculiar reedy quality of tone.[11] The Tuareg singer recites the brave deeds of a chief; Henry recounts the adventures of Jonah.

533 126 It has been practically impossible to take down Henry's song as he sings it. When he recites it, he gives an entirely different version. If I ask the meaning of a line, he has to begin all over again—and we never get very far.

533 539 Chorus: Live humble, humble, humble your soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble little chil'run
The bell done ring.
Live humble little soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble I say
The bell done ring.

"Live humble" is sung three more times with the response, "The bell done ring," following each line, and the chorus ends with its first four lines. The gist of the narrative section follows the story of Jonah's tribulations quite literally.

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[10] *Vol. I, record 86-A.*

[567] [11] *Our coastal Negroes appear to be musically more closely allied to the Tuaregs than to any other African tribe of whose songs I have been able to secure records. Record 86-B of the same series gives a lullaby sung by a Tuareg woman which—except for the difference in language—might be sung by a grandmother anywhere along this coast. If we knew the period in which certain groups of slaves came to America, and the section of Africa from which they were obtained, we might learn more about their musical background. Two records made by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition in the Belgian Congo indicate that the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia might have come from that region, since their ring-shouts show a similarity to Nos. 6 and 10 in tone, rhythm, and hand clapping. The "sharp exhalation of breath" heard in No. 10 is also demonstrated by some of our ex-slaves, but they do no "stomping," although on two or three occasions I have seen Negroes from the interior do it.*

795 "Wade in the Water," the candidates, each escorted by a church member, followed
794 to the water's edge. There the girls' skirts were tied above their knees to prevent
undignified billowing, and the assisting deacon led each candidate to the spot where
the minister stood in about two-and-a-half feet of water.

The Negroes probably follow the usual procedure of white Baptists; however,
I find that no two preachers use precisely the same words, though the substance is
[788] always the same: "In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ I baptize
thee"—and at this point the immersion takes place—"in the name of the Father, the
Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen"—and up comes the sputtering, shivering candidate. When the procession returns to the church, the ones who have just been baptized line up and receive the "right hand of fellowship" from the minister and the church members—and not until then may they consider themselves as safely within the fold.

Although the water was bitterly cold that February morning, the young people behaved very well, and only one squealed a little—which was considered very bad form. If you do not come up like a lamb it is "suspicioned" that your conversion has not been authentic, and the baptism may need to be performed again.

795 In the old days, when the Negroes were closer to Africa, baptisms in the tide-
water section took place punctiliously, no matter how inconvenient the hour, on the
178 outgoing tide.[14] In the interior, of course, where rivers and streams can be depended
[783] upon to carry the candidate's sins away from him, a baptism can be safely set for
any appointed hour. Now, cement tanks are built in the yards of conventional churches, and another picturesque custom will soon be a thing of the past. Many a time have I gone to the South End or to Frederica, before sunrise, in the hope of learning something new. Something new was not always forthcoming, but the picture in the low morning light was worth going miles to see.

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[14] *The stress laid by Negro Baptists upon baptism being performed on the outgoing tide*
(114) *lends support to the theory, held by Melville Herskovits, that the strong adherence to the*
ritual of baptism among Negro Christians is related to "the great importance of the river-cult
(771) *in Africa, particularly in view of the fact that, as has often been observed, river-cult priests*
were sold into slavery in great numbers." (Handbook of Social Psychology.)

"SETTIN'-UP"

764 (178) The custom of "settin'-up" with the dead still prevails among the Negroes, who even go so far as to ask for such a privilege on the death of a white employer to whom they are devoted. Mrs. Shadman told me that when her grandmother, Margaret Cater, died at Kelvin Grove, her family's ex-slaves came all day "to see the face." At dusk they appeared again and sat up with "Ole Miss" through the night, singing, moaning, and praying until sun-up. When Mrs. Shadman died this year, two young colored men whom she had befriended since childhood continued the custom and sat up with the body.

764 152 In some districts a "settin'-up," or "wake," as such a ceremony is now called, is more emotional than in others, and certain families are known to be extremely excitable on such occasions. A man who works for me now and then said he did not like to go to a "settin'-up" because "they holler so much."[15] A wake held at the home of the deceased is likely to be a quieter affair than one held in a church, where the mourners are apt to display a frenzy of grief. When the body is taken from the church, the "hollerin'" begins in earnest. I have always wondered if the stimulation of an audience had anything to do with the difference.

764 (272) (264) At a private "settin'-up" a big fire of logs in front of the cabin lasts through the night, and rude benches, made of boards laid on sections of a tree trunk, are placed around it. Quantities of coffee in a pot beside the fire, and a large carton of soda crackers help revive the tired mourners and keep them awake.

763 The Negroes often have a premonition of death. On St. Simon's, Deacon Henry Armstrong, who had been ailing for some months, realized his time was short, and sent for his family and friends. When they arrived he was eating his supper of fish, grits, and coffee. Later, when he stood up, moved about, and began preaching his own funeral sermon, as was sometimes done, his hearers wondered if he was "touched in the head." He called upon one deacon to sing "Old-Time Religion" and then upon another for a prayer. When a member of the group came forward to pray, Henry told him not to proceed, that he was not worthy. A "sister" came to shake his hand and say good-bye; he told her she must go to her father and mother, and beg their pardon for the wrong she had done them. She did as

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(191) [15] Such behavior is in line with established African tradition. In Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels it is stated that "the cry . . . is sometimes a fortnight or month after the decease. . . . They begin with crying and at night they go to singing and dancing, and so continue till they break-up."

763 she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

789 763 775 In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[18] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

763 ● 171 On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

IN THAT OLD FIELD

533 567 (764) Susyanna (Illustration 29),[A] learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

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[18] *As exemplified in the song: "Ride on, Conquering King," p. 183.*

[A] [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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771 Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know
772 that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the phys-
● 171 ical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which pro-
duce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in
533 their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers
771 was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found
(154) release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like
a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as
Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Ne-
(171) groes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without num-
ber, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it
was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this
533 song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put
787 themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They
will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

533
539
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

764 "preach the funeral,"[24] the St. Simon's Negroes would row all the way to Savannah
793 —over eighty miles—to get him. They landed at Frederica, where the First African
[775] Baptist Church was located.

At Aaron's funeral Laura gave the time-honored dramatic touch by growing
764 hysterical, throwing up her arms, and screaming: "Good-bye Aaron—y'u gone for-
152 ever." While the clods were shoveled upon the coffin, singing providentially kept
[767] us from hearing the sound. Different men, headed by the undertaker, took turns
filling in the grave. The way they joked and laughed as they worked rather shocked
me. I understand, however, that Africans show the same levity after distressing occasions.

M. H. Kingsley, in *Travels in West Africa*, mentions the intense love of the
764 African for funerals, and, according to the descriptions given by other explorers,
•171 there is a striking similarity in the burial customs of the natives and their rural
American cousins. In Africa it is believed that the position of the ghost in the
other world requires that the funeral be as expensive as the family can possibly
provide. Furthermore, without a fitting ceremony the departed spirit cannot reach
its final destination, but lingers among the living, making conditions very uncom-
fortable for them. The Negroes of our Southern states show the same feeling about
764 funerals. They spare no expense in making them elaborate affairs. One that took
place on St. Simon's years ago will long be remembered: "Why, Mrs. Parris', it
cost four hundred dollars. They sent to Savannah for flowers, and she was buried in
new white slippers that cost six dollars . . . !" I notice that the American Negro, no
matter what the work or business in hand, puts it aside for such an event. To pay
the cost of a funeral that will be a credit to the corpse as well as his family, the
[426] survivors will mortgage what property they may have, if they have not been so
[767] provident as to take out an insurance policy, join a "Bury League," or pay to some
society or lodge dues which range from ten to twenty-five cents a week.

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[24] When Quarterman's son-in-law died, his daughter said to me: "Tell the old man my hus-
[123] band died *three weeks ago and the funeral will be preached next Sunday*." Then she asked me *if I would please give her a black hat. A Northern friend frequently sent me boxes of summer hats in the autumn. If the original owners could have seen them in winter on the dusky wearers, they would have been surprised. The fun of fitting out the singers with becoming hats has always made me wonder if I hadn't missed my calling.*

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CHAPTER SIX

Work Songs

In the old days, before Negroes rode to work in automobiles, they sang as they 533
walked, and most of their tasks were lightened with song. One of my pleasantest 198
memories is of hearing them singing in the early morning and at sundown, and— (461)
during the heat of the day—calling to each other across wide fields. The call was
peculiar, and I always wondered how they came by such a strange form of vocal
gymnastics, since I never heard a white person do anything like it. Years later I ran 533
across a description of the trick in Natalie Curtis-Burlin's *Songs and Tales from the* 198
Dark Continent. The author, in speaking of a Bantu rain song, calls attention to a 171
passage which contains "an upward break in the voice, something like a Swiss
yodel." Such field-calls are rarely heard today, although I am told they are still in
use in the vicinity of the Okefenokee Swamp.

In the late eighteen-eighties, the Negroes in my home neighborhood—southern 533
New Jersey—began to pattern their behavior after that of the silent white folk, and 171
from that time on, little of their singing was heard. Farther south, this racial characteristic was later in disappearing. In 1901, Georgia Bryan Conrad tells us that, in her youth, "the Negroes were always singing," but adds regretfully: "Nothing is
in greater contrast to that time than the quietness of the Negroes now."[1] However, 533
there are remote places where they still sing at work. In factories where large num- 461
bers are employed in such monotonous jobs as shucking oysters or picking crabs and shrimp, rhythmic songs are used to relieve dullness. They are also sung wherever work is heavy, and concerted effort is required. In Brunswick, vessels are still loaded to the musical chant of "Sandy Anna"; freight cars at the sugar terminal are shunted for short distances to the rhythm of "Old Tar River," and the cabin in front of my house was moved on rollers from Kelvin Grove to the significant tune of "Pay Me My Money Down!"

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[1] "Reminiscences of a Southern Woman," Southern Workman, 1901.

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You know the way an' you wouldn't come home
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Every sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[535] The faster part was sung as two hops were made on one foot while the other did the scuffing.

Make a jump, jump for joy!
Make a jump, jump for joy!

This phrase was repeated over and over, with the variation:

Sheep jump, jump for joy!

243 The planters believed that rice was only good when freshly beaten,[17] and the sheaves kept for family use were put in a well-ventilated mouse-proof loft. The commercial rice was threshed in a mill, but the husks were left on, and even in cities, in the South, the rice was beaten fresh every day. The mortars were generally hollowed out of cypress or hard pine logs and used upright, although on Sapelo I have [412] seen some made of immense pieces of squared timber laid flat so that the beating took place against the grain. The pestles had two ends, one sharp for bruising the husks and removing them, the other flat for whitening. Boys or women generally did the beating. They would grasp the pestles in the middle, raising and letting [461] them fall so quickly and evenly, to the rhythm of what was more like a chant than a song, that the task was not considered difficult.

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[17] *William Ellis in his* History of Madagascar, 1838, *makes it clear that our early rice planters got their ideas about the culture and preparation of rice for the table directly from Madagascar. In* Seed from Madagascar *Duncan Clinch Heyward tells us that the seed of the Carolina Gold rice was brought from that land by a sea captain about the year 1685, but Mr. Ellis furnishes the African end of the picture. After describing planting and harvesting methods, he explains the laborious process by which rice was made ready for cooking. "The rice, which is kept in the husk in a sort of granary, is made ready for use in such quantities only as the daily consumption of the family may require." In minute detail he explains that it is then beaten in a mortar by two people using large wooden pestles, about five feet in length, so as to break and remove the outer husk without breaking the grain. The rice is taken out, and separated from the husk by winnowing; it is then beaten in the mortar a second time for the purpose of taking off the inner skin. The process is repeated a third time; tossed again in the winnowing-fan, then washed and cooked. It was reported by Francis Moor that on the West Coast of Africa men worked the corn ground, and women and girls the rice ground. Jobson, another West African traveler, says: "the wives do all the hard labor such as cleaning and pounding rice . . . which is done in mortars with great staves." One explorer mentioned that rice was so plentiful in Kongo and Angola that it hardly bears any price.*

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PEAS AN' THE RICE

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(243) In her youth, Julia Walker employed these rhythmic lines to help in thrashing rice on the floor.[18]

Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice
Peas an' the rice done done done done
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.
New rice an' okra, eat some an' lef' some
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.

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●171 [18] *James A. Grant in a Walk across Africa tells of many interesting things he saw in 1861 on the way from Zanzibar to Uganda. "On the third of April the rice harvest was being gathered. . . . The reapers consisted of negro women and girls, who sang pleasantly. . . . The thrashing of the rice was novel. A quantity of ears was placed upon a cow's hide, slaves in irons were made to work it with their toes and feet, and winnow it in the wind; and after being thoroughly sun-dried upon a clear space of cow-dunged ground, it was fit for the process of shelling in the large pestle and mortar. If a considerable amount was to be thrashed, a bludgeon answered the purpose of the negroes' feet. . . . If our Seedees had to clean rice in the wooden mortar, a dozen hands would set about the work of two. It could not be done without those who worked beating time with the pestle to their song, the lookers-on clapping hands and stamping their feet. The work and song never ceased till the rice was pounded almost into dust—such joyous reckless creatures are these simple Africans!"* To the Southerner of the nineteenth century this account presents a familiar picture.

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A. B. A. B. A.

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The rhythm of this nonsensical Butler Island song enables the rice beaters to do work which would otherwise be extremely tiresome.[20] It continues as long as the work lasts, with no change in rhythm and very little in the words.

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Uncle July mortal man, stan' right by de doo'
An' see how y'r rice done mash.[21]
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A. B. A.
Go A. B. go
Go A. B. go
July'll cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' July'll cut y'r win'.
July de mortal man
July cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
Go Lizzy go, Billy goin' t' cut y'r win'.
Go Emma go, Gally goin' t' cut y'r win'.

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[20] *Mrs. Cate tells me that each plantation had its particular songs for beating rice, just as its rowing songs were unlike those of other plantations.*

[21] *The footnote on page 232 suggests that the "reckless" Africans pounded rice in the same careless fashion.*

[191]

I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539

I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay." [22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell [23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

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[171] [22] *The editors of* Slave Songs of the United States *say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."*

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan
Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp
plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation,
called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were
also rice planters.

175 In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and
West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had
mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners
533 on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The
Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small
farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite
of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

583 Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did
—his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious
songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

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[28] *They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in* Our Todays and Yesterdays, *"there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . , and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.*

[177] *In* A Walk across Africa, *Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.*

533 After death I got to stan' a tes'
539 After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompani-
461 ment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune
264 which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my
(171) hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

(539) I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South,
354 and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The
248 best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells
567 how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of
461 the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists
(412) half an acre." Jancy Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the
(533) Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

DRINKIN' OF THE WINE

533 697 (461) The swinging rhythm of the communion song, "Drinkin' of the Wine," made it a favorite with the chain-gang for cutting weeds along the highway. The afternoon I heard it sung by convicts in front of my house, there were no chains to be seen or heard. When I asked the guard the reason, he told me they were used only to enforce camp discipline. The prisoners had been on their good behavior that week, and the chains had been left off.

697 771 I mentioned the incongruity of wearing stripes[30] and singing spirituals. He laughed and said the prisoners got very religious while in camp. It is a fact, however, that the Negro takes his religion very seriously, and, given time for meditation—enforced though it be—quite naturally reacts in this way. Then, too, he apparently 577 673 685 has a different concept of morality from white people, and in consequence the idea prevails among us that he does not put his religion into practice. But, for that matter, who does? Each race seems to have its own particular blind spot, and inability to recognize the sanctity of property appears to the white man to be the hereditary weakness of the Negroes in this country, as in Africa. Before the white man meddled with their lives, it was considered legitimate business for the inhabitants of one community to steal from another. Up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, I am told, many a slave held the ingenious idea that property could not steal from property. It is possible that this notion, coupled with the viewpoint inherited from Africa,[31] may account for the tolerance still shown by the Negro toward the light-fingered members of the race who run afoul of the law.

000 According to a *London Morning Post* correspondent at Nairobi, capital of Kenya: "To the native mind there is nothing morally wrong in thefts of stock from other natives and from European farmers." This is possibly the reason why it is hard to get our primitive Negro to see that it is wrong to take a chicken from the roost when he is hungry, or a shirt off the clothes-line when he is half-naked. The same

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[30] *The "lifers" wear a plain drab suit and the lesser offenders, stripes. It should be the other way about. When convicts escape, as they often do, protective coloration gives the advantage to those who should not have it.*

(571) [31] *In Astley's Collection, John Leo is quoted as saying that the Negroes on and between the Senegal and Gambia rivers lived in common. They had no property in land, but supported themselves in equal state, upon the natural produce of the country. Seagrave also comments on the fact there is no property in ground. The king's license is obtained and the people then go out in troops, and first clear the ground from bushes and weeds which they burn, "and so continue to work in a body for the public benefit, till every man's ground is tilled and sowed."*

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533 try, and here there is felt comparatively little back-wash a time threatened to destroy the spirituals in the up-coun- from the recent exploitation of Negro songs. In such an area certain folk-song traits and processes may be observed more clearly than elsewhere. Some of these may be indicated in the following observations on the St. Helena spirituals.

[184] 1. The spirituals of St. Helena are not markedly different from the Negro spirituals as a whole. They are sung in the characteristic sea-island dialect, of course, and minor variations occur, but fundamentally they are one with Negro spirituals in other parts of the country.

2. The spirituals are sung in unison for the most part. There is very little singing in parts except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other quartets or groups which have practised their songs. Heard from a distance, the singing in praise house or church often gives the impression of multiple part singing, but this effect is more or less of an illusion caused by some of the singers varying the pitch of a given tone or attempting a bit of tenor or alto here, a bit of bass there. Those who look for some weird or new harmonic element contributed to American music by the Negroes of the Sea Islands will be disappointed, for such harmonies as they do use are in no wise different from conventional white harmonies.

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171 3. There is apparently very little invention or improvisation going on among the island singers. Practically all of the spirituals sung on the island appear to have originated elsewhere and to have migrated to the sea-island region. Because of the continued survival there of many songs rarely heard outside the Sea Islands, it is easy

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to assume that the songs are indigenous. But recent in- 533
vestigation has shown that these island songs are found 171
among Negroes west of the Appalachians and in an obsolescent state among individuals in the piedmont of, Virginia and the Carolinas, which tends to show that the songs originated in the upper South, travelled southward and westward, and are now sung only in a few marginal places.

Perhaps this explains why there is so little mention of 533
local names or incidents in the island spirituals. The St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* tells of "Brother Fuller settin' on de tree of life," referring to the Rev. Richard Fuller, a white Baptist minister who was much esteemed by the slaves. But the tune and stanza pattern of this song probably originated farther north, and the island Negroes merely inserted local names when they learned it. *Don' Let de Win' Blow Heah No Mo'* grew out of the severe storm of 1893, but it appears to have been composed by some individual in Savannah or Charleston.

Although songs were often attributed to local people, only one instance came to the writer's attention in which a person actually claimed authorship. This man frankly said, upon being questioned, that songs known as *his* songs were not his own compositions. He said that they were merely songs which he had "caught" from someone in Savannah or from little "ballets" which he had purchased at some church convention or celebration on the mainland, and had introduced to his church.

4. The secular tendency has not been weeded out of the island spirituals to the same extent that it has among more sophisticated groups. Often when spirituals were being recorded in the outlying schools, stanzas like the fol-

533 177 In view of the illiteracy of the slave and the custom of lining out songs among illiterate whites and Negroes, it is natural that the line or the short stanza should have become the unit remembered. Just as the white people took the old church hymns and converted them into something less dignified and less difficult to learn, so did the Negroes. 000 The whites took Watts' hymn, "Jesus My All to Heaven Is Gone," inserted refrain lines and chorus and made a quite different song of it. In the *Millennial Harp* alone there are two versions of this hymn.[28] One has the refrain, "I want to wear the crown," and a chorus consisting mostly of "My heart says praise the Lord"; the other has the refrain, "Jesus says he will be with us to the 533 177 end," and a simple chorus. Illiterate people depend upon memory, and neither whites nor Negroes limited themselves to the traditional hymn stanzas. Any stanza of a hymn or of some other religious song was likely to be taken up and used wherever it would fit. The process was not peculiar to the Negroes. Indeed, they not only derived the pattern from the whites but some of their songs of this type were undoubtedly taken from the whites after the latter had manufactured them.

533 171 *Form or Pattern.* Several writers have suggested that the repetitive refrains and choruses of the spirituals, together with the custom of singing with solo, or leader, and chorus, are distinctive traits of Negro songs.[29] Take *Swing Low*, for example. Every line is followed by the

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[28] See I, 66; II, 36. In this connection, see an item in the New York *Times*, April 11, 1865, from Richmond in which the correspondent related that the Negroes held a "Jubilee Meeting" during which they sang this same song, with the refrain, "I'm going to join in this army."

[29] See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*; J. W. Work, *Folk Songs of the American Negro*; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of Negro Spirituals*.

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refrain, "Comin' for to carry me home," while each stanza of four lines is followed by the chorus,

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.

The same type exists among the old white songs, of which *Canaan* is an example:[30]

Stanza: Together let us sweetly live,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
Together let us sweetly die,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

Chorus: O Canaan, bright Canaan,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
O Canaan, it is my happy home,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

A slightly different pattern with first, second, and fourth lines the same is found in many Negro songs, typified by the following stanza:

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Parallels also exist in the white songs. For instance:

Oh, Lord, remember me,
Oh, Lord, remember me.
Now in the bowels of thy love,
Oh, Lord, remember me.[31]

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[30] One of the most popular of the revival songs, found in practically every religious songster in the ante-bellum period. See *Millennial Harp*, I, 58. This hymn is attributed to John Moffit, about 1829, according to White.

[31] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42.

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171 A still different variation of the repetitive pattern is that in which the first three lines of a quatrain are the same, as in

Good news, the chariot's comin',
Good news, the chariot's comin',
Good news, the chariot's comin',
An' I don't want her leave-a me behin'.

Parallel patterns are plentiful in the white songs in such stanzas as these:

I'm on my way to glory, (3 times)
Ye followers of the lamb.[32]

There'll be no more sorrow, (3 times)
When we all shall meet above.[33]

A further feature of the repetitive trait in Negro songs is the way in which numerous stanzas are built up by the simple insertion of such variations as *father*, *mother*, *preacher*, *deacon*, etc. This pattern existed not only in traditional English folk songs, but also in the white revival songs. In *My Brother, I Wish you Well*, a very popular white song, a stanza and chorus of fifty-two words are expanded into a song of eight stanzas totalling 418 words by the introduction of only nine new words, such as *sister*, *mother*, *neighbors*, *pastor*, *poor sinner*, etc.[34]

It can safely be asserted that there is no stanza form or repetitive pattern in the Negro spirituals which is not also found in the white revival songs.

It is customary for a spiritual to be begun with the chorus rather than the first stanza. This custom evi-

[32] *Ibid.*, II, 11.

[33] *Ibid.*, I, 34.

[34] *Millennial Harp*, I, 46.

dently existed in the white camp meetings, for some of the 533
tunes in the old books are printed with the chorus at the 171
beginning. Certainly the custom is traditional among white revival singers today, as anyone who is familiar with rural white revivals can testify.

As for the custom of singing with a lead or solo part, 533
the other voices joining in on refrain lines, there are several factors to be considered. First, the pattern is not as common in Negro songs as one might suppose. The leader, it is true, often sings the first few words or even the first line unaided. This is merely to indicate which stanza is to be sung next. As soon as the others catch the sign, they join in. This is different from the true solo-chorus pattern, which is found in such stanzas as the following:

Solo: Hypocrite, hypocrite, God despise
All: Bear yo' burden in de heat of de day.
Solo: Tongue so sharp an' he will tell lies,
All: Bear, etc.

Now on St. Helena, where presumably, any African song pattern should have flourished and survived, this true solo-chorus pattern is rather rare, occurring in about 15 per cent of the spirituals sung there; whereas in the up-country spirituals, judging by the Hampton and Fisk collections, this pattern is more common.[28] Finally, there is 533
the point that the leader-chorus pattern also existed to 171
some extent in the white songs.[29] The extent of its use can

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[28] In the latest Hampton edition, practically nine-tenths of the songs are arranged in this way. Much of this is due, I believe, to an effort to arrange the songs so as to be especially suitable for quartet singing. In ordinary singing, some of the "solo" sections are really sung *in unison*, which is a different matter.

[29] The arrangement of some of the tunes indicates this. See also some of the statements quoted above from Bellinger's *Stray Leaves*, where it was stated that

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533 probably never be determined, for our knowledge of *how*
•171 the whites sang their songs is fragmentary.

The most logical way to view the leader-chorus pattern
533 in Negro songs is to think of it as, partially at least,
171 a product of the cultural situation during the time the Negro
177 was taking over the white revival songs. The pattern was certainly used by whites, especially when a new song was being taught to people who were nearly all illiterate. The pattern was thus present for the Negro to copy, and, further, the same condition of illiteracy among Negroes necessitated the use of the pattern when new
533 songs were being taught them. There is, of course, the possibility that this style of singing represents a survival
178 of an African custom, as has been claimed by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, James Weldon Johnson, N. G. J. Ballanta, and other writers.

TUNES

533 *Modes.* The distribution of tunes according to the modes in which they are sung is an interesting and significant point of comparison. In his *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, Krehbiel reported the results of an analysis of 527 Negro songs.[27] The general modal distribution of these songs, compared with a similar analysis of 414 white religious songs,[28] is as follows:

	NEGRO SONGS PER CENT	WHITE SONGS PER CENT
Major	83.8	78.9
Minor	11.7	18.6
Mixed or vague	4.4	2.4

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(533) ne man came down the aisle singing certain words, and hundred of voices re-
(171) plied with certain words.

[27] Includes about 50 secular songs. Most of the songs are from the United States, but a few are from the West Indies. Krehbiel, p. 43. Fisher (*Seventy Negro Spirituals*) made a similar analysis, with about the same results.

[28] From ~~*The Christian Lyre*~~ and *Millennial Harp*.

There is quite evidently no significant point of difference here. In fact, the only significant thing here is the remarkable agreement between the modal distributions of the white and the Negro songs. Krehbiel's figures showing that about one-tenth of Negro songs are minor were published years ago, yet the assertion that Negro music is predominantly minor is still heard.[30] Not only is Negro music predominantly major, but it is less in the minor mode than were the white revival songs of a century ago. Minors are practically extinct in ordinary white church music today, but many weird tunes in that mode are to be found in the old revival songsters. 533

Deviations from the Conventional Scale. Of more importance, however, is a comparison of the details of the distributions within the major and minor modes. While Western music in general is based on what is called the diatonic scale of seven tones, all tunes do not necessarily make use of all the possible tones in the scale. In a given tune, one or more tones may be missing or sharped or flatted. The presence or absence of such variations from the conventional scale is a significant point in the comparison of two musics. The following list comprises 533 171 all the variations of the major mode which occurred more than once in the two white song books mentioned above. The deviations are listed in the order of their importance, the most frequent one being at the head of the list. In the parallel column the presence or absence of these same deviations is indicated, the figures denoting the rank of the trait in Negro songs.

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[30] Persons untrained in music tend to identify any plaintive or weird tune as minor, ignorant of the fact that this term designates a specific musical trait which is determined by the tonal relations and which may or may not give an impression of sadness. It is possible to arrange major and minor chords or melodies so that even a musical person will confuse them. An interesting incident recently appeared in Reed Smith's *South Carolina Ballads*, p. 144. As good an observer as Smith described a certain song as "a peculiar minor air," yet the tune is major throughout. The mistake arose, I think, because the fourth and seventh tones are missing. This leads me to the point that the extensive use of the pentatonic scales in Negro songs (i.e. major with the fourth and seventh tones omitted) is responsible for the layman's belief that Negro music tends to be minor. The absence of the fourth and seventh in pentatonic tunes does often produce plaintive effects, and this, together with the customary minor-sad association, is sufficient to explain the error.

Deviations in White Songs	Rank of Same in Negro Songs
1. Absence of seventh tone	2
2. Absence of fourth and seventh	1
3. Absence of fourth	3
4. Absence of sixth	4
5. Flat seventh	5
6. Absence of sixth and seventh	6
7. Flat third	7

Every variation in the white songs is found in the Negro songs, and none is present in the Negro songs which is not also found in the white songs. Furthermore, the only point of difference in the ranks of the traits in the major mode is that the absence of the fourth and seventh tones heads the list for Negro songs and comes second in the white songs.

Krehbiel thought that the tunes in the minor mode show the independence of the spirituals of European influence. He named the following deviations as significant: raised seventh, raised sixth, and absence of sixth.[40] These are exactly the same three most frequent deviations in the white minor tunes which I analyzed.

[40] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 83 et seq. Fisher, using a different grouping, gets the following: minor with flat seventh, 32; with sharp seventh (harmonic), 15; without seventh, 14; with sharp and flat seventh, 7; total, 68. See *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

Taking up now more detailed comparisons between the white songs and the spirituals, we find the following distribution of traits for the songs in the major mode.[41]

	Number		Per Cent	
	White	Negro‡	White	Negro
Pentatonic	23	111	9.6	25.1
No seventh	39	78	16.2	17.6
No fourth	10	45	4.2	10.2
Flat seventh	8	20	3.3	4.5
No sixth	12	*	5.0	*
No sixth and seventh	5	*	2.1	*
Other major	143	188	59.6	42.6
Total	240	442	100.0	100.0

‡ Figures taken from Krehbiel's study of 527 Negro songs. See *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 43.

* Krehbiel did not list these at all. They are found in the spirituals to about the same extent as in white songs. A count of 200 of the same songs that Krehbiel used shows the absence of sixth in 6.3 per cent of the cases, and the absence of sixth and seventh in 2.9 per cent of the cases.

Several things stand forth in this table. First, the flat seventh, so often spoken of as a characteristic of American Negro music, turns out to be relatively rare. It will be discussed presently. Next, the table shows that the absence of the fourth tone and the absence of the seventh tone in the spirituals are actually more significant statistically than the flat seventh. But these are also present in white songs in sufficient proportion to prohibit their being listed as distinctive traits of the spirituals.

The proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is high—25.1 per cent of all the majors as against 9.6 per cent in the white songs. The pentatonic scale, with the

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[41] For Fisher's data on spirituals, which are very similar to Krehbiel's, see his *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

533 •171 fourth and seventh tones omitted, is said by Krehbiel, Work, Dett, Ballanta, and others to be the outstanding characteristic of native African music. Here, then, would seem to be positive proof of the influence of African music on the spirituals. However, several points of interest need to be discussed here.

First, the pentatonic scale is not entirely unknown to the white songs, as it is found in nearly 10 per cent of all tunes in the major mode in the two books studied. This scale seems to be a sort of simplified medium of musical expression, for it is the basis of the music of most of the less civilized peoples, and is found in the simpler songs of the English and Americans—the nursery songs, children's game songs, folk ballads, unsophisticated religious songs—to a greater extent than among the art songs.

533 177 Some of the writers on Negro songs have pointed out the similarity of Negro and Scotch music in respect to pentatonic tunes, but they have always vigorously denied any possible Scotch influence on Negro music. In this, they are in error. They contend that there were not enough Scotch in the South in colonial and ante-bellum days to have left any influence on the music of the time. This contention falls down in the face of facts which show that, aside from the great wave of Scotch-Irish migration which came from the North and settled in the Southern piedmont and mountain regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a considerable sprinkling of both Highland and Lowland Scotch in the Southern slave states, entering by way of Charleston, Wilmington, and Norfolk. Estimates for colonial North Carolina,

for example, place the proportion of Scotch at from 11 to 40 per cent of the total white population.[42] 533 177

But, what is of greater significance, the folk-song culture of the English and the English-speaking Scotch is essentially the same.[43] 533 171 177 This is especially true of the Lowland Scotch and the Northern English, and this is the area from which came the majority of people whom we call Scotch-Irish. The use of the "gapped" scale turns out not to be confined to the Scotch, but to be characteristic of folk singing in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[44] At any rate, whether one calls them Scotch, Scotch-Irish, or English, the music which these people brought to this country is in many respects similar to the music of the Negro spirituals. Recent work has shown that the traditional English and Scottish folk music has survived to a surprising extent in this country. What of the presence of the pentatonic mode in this music?

In his *South Carolina Ballads*, Professor Reed Smith 000 published fourteen traditional ballad tunes collected from white people. Four, or 28 per cent, of these are pentatonic. From the Appalachians, where these old songs have survived best, larger collections are available. In the great collection contained in Campbell and Sharp's *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, 324 folk tunes are published. The "gapped" scale is predominant. The pentatonic, with fourth and seventh tones omitted, is the outstanding scale of these songs. The proportions of

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[42] See U. S. Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p. 117. The highest estimate, 40 per cent, is made by Professor R. D. W. Connor of the University of North Carolina. See his *History of North Carolina*.

[43] Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, Introduction, p. xix.

[44] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Songs*; also Campbell and Sharp, Introduction.

which they brought with them to America and which they 000
have preserved so well in the mountains. The Scotch-Irish and English peasantry, with their love of song and their religious zeal, undoubtedly played a conspicuous part in shaping the folk music of the camp meetings. The revival movement came along on the heels of the great migration from Pennsylvania to the Southern piedmont. In fact, some of the editorial writers of a century ago attributed the successes and the excesses of the revivals to the Scotch-Irish.

The theory that the pentatonic scale in the Negro spir- 533
ituals is a distinctive trait owing its origin to African music 171
loses some of its force. For it is now just as plausible to 177
say that, since the general tendency has been for the Negro to adopt white culture patterns, and since the proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is the same as in the English and Scottish folk songs, the Negro took over his religious folk songs from the folk productions of the English and Scotch-Irish. At any rate it cannot be logically maintained that a trait which exists in English folk music in America to the same extent as it does in Negro folk music is a *distinctive* trait of Negro music.

The absence of the seventh tone in the tunes of the 000
spirituals is statistically next in importance. This, however, is as frequent in the white revival songs as in the spirituals—16.2 per cent in the former and 17.6 per cent in the latter. Analysis of the collections of English ballad music surviving in America shows about the same proportion of no-seventh tunes. Obviously there is nothing distinctively Negro here. The history of the missing seventh in English folk music is similar to that of the pentatonic

> the village organist struggling to force the sharpened seventh, especially of tunes in the minor mode, upon the unwilling ears of a rustic congregation?[80] 000
>
> This use of the flatted seventh, as though it were a leading-note, is often to be found in folk-airs, especially in those of England. The modern musician finds, in this practice, that which is so directly at variance with all that he believes to be natural, that I have known him to question the fact that folk-singers really do sing such phrases. They do, however, and the effect is often very beautiful.[81]

Ballanta has tried to distinguish between the Negro's flat seventh and the use of that tone in white music.[82] 533 171
With the Negro, he says, the tone is a regular or normal element in the scale, not necessitating any modulation, while in white music the occurrence of this tone always induces a modulation to the key of the subdominant, as from C-major to F-major, for example. Ballanta is quite right if he is thinking of conventional white music, for training in our present melodic system has made it difficult for musicians to conceive of the use of a flat seventh without modulating to a flatter key. The distinction which he claims for this tone in Negro music, however, is exactly the same thing which characterizes the English folk use of the flat seventh, namely, as a natural tone in the scale inducing no modulation. This use of it occurs in the traditional ballads and other songs surviving in the Appalachians. (177) Since the Negro was in contact with the English folk music culture throughout the period of slavery, it is just as logical to suppose that his use of the flat seventh was borrowed as to believe that he brought it from Africa.

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[80] *English Folk-Song*, pp. 55-6.

[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

[82] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Foreword, xiv.

533 171 Perhaps it is no accident that the proportion of flat sevenths is so nearly the same in English-American folk music and the Negro spirituals. At any rate, the flat seventh should not be thought of as a peculiar trait of Negro music.

There is one more point at which the music of the spirituals is said to vary from white music, and that is on the third tone of the scale. Any collector of Negro tunes can vouch for the fact that a singer sometimes sings a third which is neither the regular tone nor its flat. It is as a rule midway between the third and its flat (in C-scale, for example, between E and E flat.) The term "neutral third" has been applied to this tone. It cannot be represented on our conventional staff, hence its frequency has never been actually noted down as has the flat seventh.[33] From experience I should judge it to be of about the same frequency as the flat seventh. In *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel has pictured two or three actual instances of the neutral third. He discusses it as a possible African trait in Negro music, intimating that this is the probable explanation. However, I have heard white folk singers use exactly the same intonation of the third, and it was derived by them not from the Negro but from their English folk music culture. To quote Sharp again:

> It must be understood that the third is not a fixed note in the folk-scale, as it is in both of the modern scales. The English folk-singer varies the intonation of this note very considerably. His major third is never so sharp as the corresponding interval in the tempered scale, to which modern ears are attuned. On the other hand, it is often so flat that it is hardly to be distinguished from the minor third. Frequently, too, it is a "neutral" third,

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[33] Strictly speaking, the flat seventh is not always flat enough to deserve that name, for it is sometimes intoned between the major seventh and minor seventh. It would really be more accurate to call it neutral.

i. e., neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrases in which it occurs.[34] 533 171

To summarize the present section: (1) Certain peculiarities of mode and scale supposed to be characteristic of the Negro spirituals are found in a sample of white revival tunes of a century ago to a sufficient extent to raise a question as to the validity of the claim that they are distinctive traits of the spirituals. (2) A study of English folk music in its native land and as it survives in America reveals that every supposedly distinctive scale trait of the spirituals is found in the English folk music, and that the proportions of each trait are practically the same in both musics.

Suppose for a moment, however, that the scale and modal peculiarities of the spirituals are African survivals. Where would one expect to find these traits preserved best? Naturally in isolated places like the Sea Islands where the Negroes have been off the path of social change and have had relatively little contact with white people, especially since the Civil War. What light do the St. Helena spirituals throw upon this question? 533 178 [177]

The Allen collection (1867) contained 55 spiritual tunes from St. Helena. Of these 80 per cent were major and 14 per cent were minor. These proportions are about the same as in the white hymns of that time. The pentatonic, which should have been very frequent here if it is an African survival, is found in about 13 per cent of the major

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[34] *English Folk-Song*, p. 71.

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533 "It may be taken, as a general statement, that they never change their key or their mode."[59] Accidental sharps and flats occur occasionally both in the spirituals and in white revival songs, but they are nearly always auxiliary notes which call for no change of key or mode.

Intervals. The pitch distance of each note from the keynote or from a preceding note in a tune affords a basis of comparison of one type of music with another. When the interval is computed as of a certain number of steps below or above the keynote, it is called a keynote interval.[60] When it is computed with reference to the preceding note, it is known as a previous-note interval. A computation of intervals makes possible a statistical or composite view of a large number of tunes.

533 • 171 A computation of keynote intervals in the first forty-five songs in *Millennial Harp* as compared with thirty-five spirituals, taken at random from Allen's *Slave Songs* and the Fisk and Hampton collections, is summarized in the following table.[61]

	Frequency of Interval	
Keynote Intervals	White Songs	Negro Songs
1. Pı (keynote)	396	413
2. Major 3rd above keynote	388	358
3. Perfect 5th above keynote	346	268
4. Major 2nd above keynote	324	254
5. Perfect 4th above keynote	194	117
6. Perfect 4th below keynote	86	101

[59] Sharp, *English Folk-Song*, p. 68.

[60] In *C*-scale, for example, *D* is the regular second tone, and is therefore said to be a major second from the keynote; *F* is a *perfect fourth*; *G*, a *perfect fifth*; *B*, a *major seventh*; *B flat*, a *minor seventh*, i.e., a half-step short of a *major seventh*.

[61] Omitting a few rarely used intervals which occurred only three or four times. For a similar analysis of intervals in a score of mixed Negro songs, see Metfessel, *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 142 *et seq.*

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7.	Major 6th above keynote	100	98
8.	Minor 3rd below keynote	59	63
9.	Octave above keynote	79	51
10.	Minor 2nd below keynote	52	37
11.	Minor 3rd above keynote	39	36
12.	Minor 7th above keynote	9	24
13.	Major 7th above keynote	31	6
	Total number of intervals	2,103	1,826

The intervals are ranked in the order of their importance in the Negro songs. It will be noted that the white ranks correspond very closely with these. The comparison of ranks, taking the order of the intervals in the Negro songs as the basis, is as follows:

Negro: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13
White: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 7 - 6 - 9 - 8 - 10 - 11 - 13 - 12

It will further be noted that the first three intervals listed—incidentally, these form the major triad—occupy half of the entire number of tones in both white and Negro songs. To be exact, 54 per cent of the white song intervals and 57 per cent of the Negro are in the major triad. There is an interesting difference between the distributions of these three leading intervals:

	Percentage Distribution	
	White	Negro
Keynote	19	23
Major 3rd	18	19
Perfect 5th	17	15
	54	57
All others	46	43
	100	100

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The spread of these three intervals is rather even over the major triad in the white songs, while the Negro songs make larger use of the keynote and smaller use of the fifth tone. In other words, the Negro songs show a simpler melodic structure in the sense that they cluster more about the keynote than do the white songs. The comparison, however, develops no serious differences between the two types of song.[62]

Endings on other than the keynote. It is the usual thing for a song to end on the tonic or keynote, this being required to give a feeling of completion or satisfaction, but occasional deviations may be found. Of 205 spirituals in the major mode, thirteen end on the fifth tone rather than on the tonic; and, of 325 old white religious songs, six end on the fifth. Thus the trait is found in both types of songs, but is more frequent in the spirituals than in the white songs. The white religious songs, it should be repeated, are only partially representative of the musical environment of the colonial and ante-bellum period. The traditional ballads and other folk songs brought over from England by the white people had a considerably larger proportion of songs ending on the fifth. Several white songs end on the third, but I know of only one spiritual which ends on the third.[63]

Melodic patterns. Tunes can be grouped according to certain figures or patterns which they follow. Consider the opening phrases, for example. The most common

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[62] The comparison of the other kind of interval, the previous-note interval, cannot be included in the present study. Metfessel, p. 142 *et seq.*, has some figures on previous-note intervals, but he analyzed blues and other songs along with spirituals. He found the minor third to be the most frequent previous-note interval.

[63] Allen, *Slave Songs*, No. 88, p. 68.

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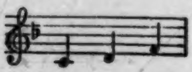
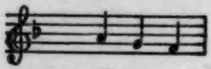
opening pattern in the spirituals, with variations in rhythm, of course, is:[67]

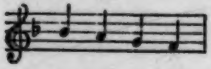


White folk songs and revival songs abound in the same pattern. As Sharp says, this beginning is found in "many folk-tunes, especially those of Celtic nations."[68]

Closing patterns are very diverse, but a sampling of fifty spirituals and fifty white revival songs shows that the leading pattern is composed of the last three, sometimes four, notes of the major scale in descending order. Thus



or



This type of ending occurs in a little over one-third of both white and Negro songs.

A tune, taken as a whole, can usually be divided into phrases which are related in certain ways. Most of the tunes of the spirituals, like the words, fall into four phrases, the patterns of which may be indicated by A - B - A - B, A - B - A - C, A - B - C - D, etc. In the familiar spiritual,

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[67] See, for example, *'Rastlin' Jacob; Old Ship of Zion; He Ain't Comin' Here to Die No Mo'; Oh, Freedom; I've Got a Mother in de Heaven; I'm a-Rolling; Old Time Religion; I'm Goin' to See My Lovin' Father When I Get Home; Go Round; Dere is Rest for de Weary Traveler; You Can't Find a New Hiding Place; I Am Hunting for a City; When I Lay My Burden Down; O Lord, Have Mercy on Me; I'm Going Down to de River Jordan; Fix Me, Jesus; Angel Rolled de Stone Away;* and others.

[68] *English Folk-Song*, p. 86.

533 *I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Alway*s, for example, the
•171 pattern is A - B - A - C, that is, the first and third phrases
are the same, while the second and fourth are different. This pattern is found in nearly fifty per cent of the spirituals. If the three patterns, A - B - A - C, A - B - A - B, and A - B - C - D, be taken out, only a handful of spirituals remain for other patterns. The same holds true for white revival songs and folk songs, and it cannot be argued that there is any particular melodic pattern which is peculiar to the spirituals.

533 *Harmony.* A thorough consideration of all the questions centering around the harmonies of the spirituals would involve a long technical discussion which would go beyond the limits of this treatise. In brief, it may be pointed out (1) that the testimony of the majority of the early travelers in Africa is to the effect that singing in harmony seems to have been rare or poorly developed in West Africa;[66] (2) that on the Sea Islands, where contact with white music has been limited and where the Negroes should have preserved their African harmonies if they had any, the spirituals are usually sung in unison[67]

[66] Consult Wallaschek, *Primitive Music.*

[67] The same observation was made by Allen in *Slave Songs* and by Miss Towne
[114] in her *Letters and Diary.* In *The Book of American Negro Spirituals,* James Weldon Johnson says that Allen probably was mistaken, that the Negroes sang in harmony but that it was bizarre and Allen did not appreciate it. I am convinced that Allen knew what he was talking about, for I can vouch for the fact that during a residence of nearly four months on St. Helena, I never heard a single spiritual sung in full harmony by the ordinary untrained folk in the schools, churches, and praise houses. Sometimes I heard a girl attempting an alto part, but it was always the conventional alto of white songs. It was a revelation to listen to a member of the Penn School Quartet attempt to teach a quartet of boys from an outlying school the simple harmonies for a spiritual which they were going to sing in a quartet contest. To those who like to say, "Get four Negro boys together and you have a quartet," I would say, true of the Negro boys and true of white boys—*provided the boys are familiar with the old reliable harmonies.*

except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other persons who have a rudimentary knowledge of sight singing; and (3) that the harmonies used by Negroes, when they use any, are exceedingly simple and are not different from conventional white harmonies. It is extremely doubtful whether the Negro has contributed anything new in harmony in the spirituals. William Arms Fisher, whose introduction to *Seventy Negro Spirituals* is a valuable essay on Negro music, recognized this when he wrote:[88] 533

> The net result of the work of these two earnest seekers for the true Negro harmony is therefore disappointing to those expecting something unusual, for, as already stated, the harmonization in both cases is altogether conventional.

TEMPO AND RHYTHM

Metre. Williams Arms Fisher has pointed out the preponderance of duple time in Negro songs and the preponderance of triple time in other folk songs:[89] 533 171.

> Out of the 405 spirituals included in the three first published collections, only 13 are in triple metre. . . . In contrast to this, 53 of the 100 songs in Bantock's *Folksongs of All Nations* are in triple or compound metre, while an analysis of Florence H. Botsford's *Folksongs of Many Peoples* shows that in two volumes containing 368 songs nearly 44 per cent are in triple metre.

An analysis of 250 white religious songs from *Millennial Harp* and *The Christian Lyre* as compared with 250 Negro spirituals from the Allen, Hampton, and Fisk collections, is as follows:

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[88] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xv. The two persons referred to are Miss Emily Hallowell, who edited *Calhoun Plantation Songs*, and Mrs. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, who edited *Negro Folk-Songs, Hampton Series.*

[89] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xvi.

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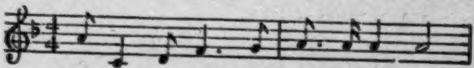
	PER CENT	
	NEGRO SONGS	WHITE SONGS
Duple Time	96	70
Triple Time	4	30

Triple time is almost unknown in the spirituals, but is found in nearly a third of the white songs studied.[70] Two-part time probably predominates among Negro singers because it is so intimately connected with their habit of swaying the body, patting the feet, and clapping the hands while singing. These things fall naturally into two-part time beats, and I have observed over and over that when the untrained Negro attempts to sing without giving himself the benefit of these bodily rhythmic clues, he is a very poor time keeper. This habit may well represent the survival of African tempo patterns.[70a]

533 *Syncopation.* Syncopation is the very soul of the rhythmic patterns of the spirituals. The emphasis is often shifted from the strong to the weak part of a time unit as in the following measures from *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen:*



There were some unusual rhythm patterns in the white revival tunes, however, as the following extracts will show:[71]

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[70] It is interesting to note, however, that, if the most folksy of the published revival songs be taken as a group, only nine or ten per cent use triple time.

[70a] It is not certain, however, that African metre is predominantly duple. Krehbiel and others seem to have assumed this. But note that C. S. Myers in Jekyll's *Jamaican Song and Story*, Appendix A, spoke of the "fondness for triple measure" in a group of African songs which he analyzed.

[71] From *Millennial Harp*, I, 40 and 47, respectively.

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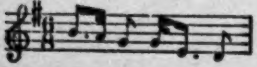

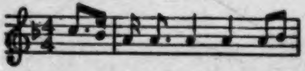

But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns. 171 177 178

Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes

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Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion. 121 177 533

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 177 533

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FOLK TALES

The folk stories of St. Helena Island represent several different heritages. Undoubtedly the majority of the stories were brought there by Negroes, but not all of them are native African stories. Some appear to have been carried from the Iberian Peninsula or from the Cape Verde Islands by sailors to West Africa, whence they were brought by the Negroes to the United States. Others are of Asiatic descent, having been taken into Africa long before the slave trade began. Still others were European tales learned by the Negroes in the West Indies and brought by them into the Southern States when they were sold to the early planters on the Carolina and Georgia coast. Added to these are European tales brought over by the English settlers or imported more recently by other Europeans. The culture of the sea-island Negroes is, therefore, singularly rich in folk stories. 538 171

As Mrs. Parsons has pointed out, there is a close kinship, not only in type of story and subject matter, but in dialect and idiom, between the St. Helena tales and the folk stories told by the Negroes of the Bahamas. The relationship is not accidental, for there was a cross-migration between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. West Indian and other island planters are known to have moved to South Carolina and Georgia, bringing slaves with them, and in the early plantation days in these colonies, the planters preferred the seasoned slaves of the West Indies over the raw Africans. On the other hand, the turn of political events in the American colonies caused some, particularly the United Loyalists, to move to the Bahamas and other islands, taking their households with them. 538 171 175 567

000 them.

538 •171 An example of kinship is found in the habit of opening a story with

> Once upon a time, a very good time,
> Monkey chaw tobacco an' spit white lime,

or

> Monkey chaw tobacco an' goose drink wine,

or some other variant of this rhyme, which is found on St. Helena as well as in the Bahamas. Of this type of opening Mrs. Parsons said, "There was no trace in the Carolina tales." Its use is rather common, however, especially on Ladies Island, adjoining St. Helena. It is one of those things which are stored in memory and are not used unless some train of association sets them off. A group of boys were telling stories. All of a sudden, one of them recalled this old nominee and began his story with it. Immediately the others wanted to give their versions of it, and in less than a minute half a dozen variations of this opening rhyme had been contributed.

There are also many points of similarity between the sea-island tales and the African folk stories. For example, the hare or rabbit, an important animal in the folklore of many peoples, plays the same role in the African tales that he does in the sea-island tales. He nearly always outwits the other animals by his cunning, deceit, and trickery. No one could read works like Chatelain's *Folk Tales of Angola*, Dennett's *Folk-lore of the Fjort*, or Nassau's *Where Animals Talk*, without concluding that a great many of the African tales have come into our country with very little change except that which was necessitated by the adaptation to English culture.

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PLAYING DEAD IN THE ROAD[6]

Once a man been fishin' an' had a cyaart load o' fish. Buh Rabbit lay down side o' de road like 'e daid. De cyaart go by, an' den Buh Rabbit run t'rough de woods an' lay down 'side de road again. Cyaart come along an' de man say, "How come so many rabbit daid een de road today. If I see anudder one, I pick um up." Buh Rabbit run roun' an' lay down 'side de road again. W'en de man come along he say, "I never see so many daid rabbit. I t'ink I bigin to pick um up." So he pick up Buh Rabbit an' t'row 'im up on de cyaart wid de fish.

Buh Rabbit t'row off fish an' t'row off fish till he got all he want, den he jump off an' go back an' pick up de fish an' take um home. Buh Wolf come along an' see all de fish. He want to know how Buh Rabbit got um. Buh Rabbit say, "Man, I play like I daid, an' de man put me on de cyaart, and I t'row off de fish." So nex' day Buh Wolf done de same trick. De man stopped de cyaart, say, "Well, Buh Rabbit fool me dat way, but you no fool me," an' he beat Buh Wolf to deat' an' carry 'im home fo' he chillun.

X

FATAL IMITATION[7]

Buh Rabbit see Buh Pa'tridge one day, an' Buh Pa'tridge had 'e haid undah 'e wing. Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Pa'tridge, weh yo' haid?" Buh Pa'tridge mek answer, "I leff um at home, Buh Rabbit." "You leff um

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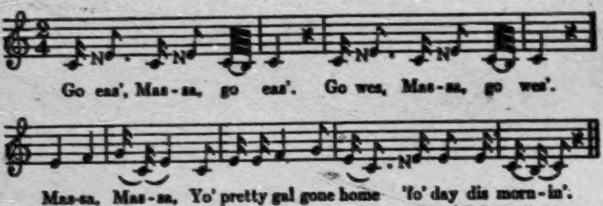
[6] From Edisto Island. An unusual variant of "Playing Dead Twice in the Road," which is quite popular in the Bahamas, according to Parsons, but which she failed to find in the Sea Islands. See *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, p. 44.

[7] *Cf.* Parsons, pp. 33-5.


Go eas', Mas-sa, go eas'. Go wes, Mas-sa, go wes'.
Mas-sa, Mas-sa, Yo' pretty gal gone home 'fo' day dis morn-in'.

NOTE: N indicates a neutral third, in this case a tone between E and E-flat.

Debbil yeah dat, an' 'e jump on 'e hoss an' staa't fuh obertake de gal. She drop one o' de needle an' big fores' grow up, an' debbil have to git ax an' cut 'e way all t'rough um. but 'e git t'rough an' 'bout to ketch de gal ag'in. She drop annodah needle, an' big rivah rise up, an' debbil have to go back an' git boat an' row across. Gal almos' home now, but debbil git across rivah an' keep a comin'. 'E jes' 'bout to ketch 'er when she drop de las' needle. When she drop dat a big fiah come an' burn up de debbil. Den she git home wid her faddah and muddah.

XV

TOO LAZY TO LIVE[11]

Once there was a slave on Wallace or Tom Fripp Plantation who was too lazy to work. His master punished him, but he wouldn't work. When his master gave him corn to grind for bread, he wanted somebody to grind

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[11] As told by Mr. Aurelius Brown, teacher in Penn School. I found several variants of this story, usually given local settings. It is interesting to note, however, that it was known more than a hundred years ago in Jamaica. In his charming *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, Matthew Gregory ("Monk") Lewis relates that the story was thought to have originated on a certain Jamaican plantation whose owner was accustomed to disposing of his worn-out slaves by sending them to a desolate place called "the Gulley" and leaving them to die of exposure and starvation. The cruel master always had his men bring back the shroud and board so that he would have no expense. See the song, as quoted by Lewis in his *Journal*, p. 322.

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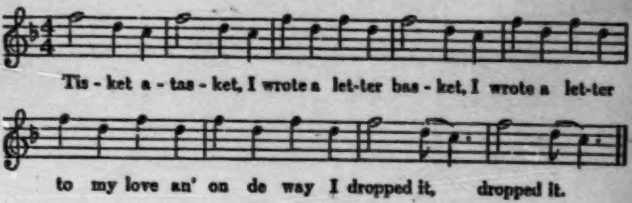
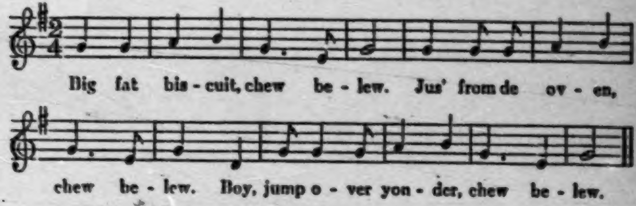

Tis - ket a - tas - ket, I wrote a let-ter bas - ket, I wrote a let-ter
to my love an' on de way I dropped it, dropped it.

1. Tiskit, a-taskit, I wrote a letter basket.
I wrote a letter to my love an' on my way I dropped it.

V[30]


Big fat bis - cuit, chew be - lew. Jus' from de ov - en,
chew be - lew. Boy, jump o - ver yon - der, chew be - lew.

1. Big, fat biscuit, chew belew.
Jus' from de kitchen, chew belew.
Boy, jump over yonder, chew belew.

2. Big fat biscuit, etc.
Girl, jump over yonder, chew belew.

FOLK BELIEFS

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In general it may be said that the folk beliefs of the Negroes of St. Helena Island are not different from the

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[29] This is a form of drop-the-handkerchief. The players were not all sure of the words. Some said, "I wrote a little basket," others said, "I made a little basket." The latter would make better sense, but the majority sang it as given here.

[30] The player designated in the third line runs to the place indicated by the singers. Compare Parsons, p. 201.

beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they 771
have actually ceased to take seriously many of the oldtime 17
superstitions because of the influence which Penn
School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people 759
who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order 754
to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or
"voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who 757
actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there 241
are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar 231
phases. But the general status of the island culture as 821
far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the
level of the more backward white groups in this country.
A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs 177
found in the South is of European descent, and this holds
true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs 844
which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, 789
without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a
hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the afterpains
attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the 757
patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been 825
dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud
dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families
try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is
believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even
her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom 758
may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick 789
person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking 776
the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, 757
stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of
such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard
and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox,
soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in
a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old
son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that
is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he
was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. Another
[827] woman believed that if a stammering child drank
water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the
774 spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue unless
[777] it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby
be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
[764] over the coffin from one person to another in order to
[789] prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his infant
764 was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of
789 the superstition, but other people at the funeral became
very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give
him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
on the grave the things last used by a person. These are
[171] usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other
inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are
left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

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Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King related that an old woman showed her some spots on a mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which came back because the mirror was not covered. The water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will cause boils and sores on the legs. 764 [753]

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume. Since there is little in them which differs from Southern Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition. 128 [171] [114]